

Unheard Voices of Black Men:  
Analyzing Black men's issue of Intersectionality and  
Microaggression in *The Son of Mr. Suleman*, *The Good House*, and  
*Riot Baby*

By

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20303020

A thesis submitted to the Department of English and Humanities in partial fulfillment of  
the requirements for the degree of  
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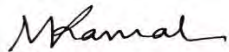
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## **Declaration**

It is hereby declared that

1. The thesis submitted is my own original work while completing degree at Brac University.
2. The thesis does not contain material previously published or written by a third party, except where this is appropriately cited through full and accurate referencing.
3. The thesis does not contain material which has been accepted, or submitted, for any other degree or diploma at a university or other institution.
4. I have acknowledged all main sources of help.



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## Approval

The thesis titled –Unheard Voices of Black Men: Analyzing Black men’s issue of Intersectionality and Microaggression in *The Son of Mr. Suleman*, *The Good House*, and *Riot Baby*” submitted by Monika Kamal Nishat (20303020) of Fall 2023 has been accepted as satisfactory in partial fulfillment of the requirement for the degree of Bachelor of Arts in English on 15<sup>th</sup> of May 2024.

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## Abstract

The objective of the thesis is to expand the understanding of the theory of intersectionality and microaggression by addressing the issues of intersectionality and microaggression concerning African American men, Mr. Pi, Corey, and Kev from *The Son of Mr. Suleman*, *The Good House*, and *Riot Baby* to investigate how the intersection of race, gender, sex, class, ethnicity, nationality, age, profession, and political standpoint generate injustice, violence, and discrimination against them by Whites and even Blacks. The thesis also examines the motivation of the offenders and the counter-reaction of Mr. Pi, Corey, and Kev against microaggression. *The Son of Mr. Suleman* by Eric Jerome Dickey is a contemporary romance fiction that profoundly emphasizes reverse sexism and the vulnerabilities of Mr. Pi caused by Whites and Black women. *The Good House* by Tananarive Due belongs to horror fiction that sheds light on Corey who becomes the victim of racial segregation and manipulation of a white spirit who uses Black/White dichotomy to accomplish revenge. *Riot Baby* by Tochi Onyebuchi is a speculative fiction that entails the horrific story of Kev whose life is entrapped by an unfair criminal justice system. The theory of “Intersectionality” focuses on the minor group of people who experience complex social inequalities and violence by the dominant group due to their overlapping social identities. While borrowing the core idea of intersectionality from the existing resources, it has been found that the theorization solely emphasizes the vulnerabilities of Black women mostly by Crenshaw (1989, 1991, 2010, 2013), MacKinnon (2013), Collins (2015), even though the intersectional scholars (Nash 2008, Crenshaw 2017) state the theory has room to expand. Hence, it is high time to shift the focus from Black women to African American men's issues of intersectionality. Additionally, even in the era of post-racism, racial hatred persists in more subtle forms through microaggression. From the existing resources, it has been observed that insufficient scholarly attention has been given to discussing microaggression concerning African American men from literary contexts. To accomplish the research, the theory of intersectionality and microaggression has been used as the core frameworks and oppression olympic, some of the Fanonian and Foucauldian ideas have been used as supporting frameworks for critical analysis.

**Keywords:** African American men, black men vulnerabilities, intersectionality, microaggression, overlapping social identities, prejudice, reverse sexism, unfair criminal justice system, violence.

## **Dedication**

To all the African American men who have been fighting for their dignity.

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## Chapter 1: Introduction

“Inside each story lives a thousand more tales waiting to be told.”

—Eric Jerome Dickey

Every story has multiple layers of stories that are unheard of and yet to be explored and interpreted concerning different contexts. Although racism and discrimination against African American men in the United States are often discussed, violence, oppression, intentional prejudice through subtleness, and biased criminal justice system that they face by Whites and sometimes by Blacks in special contexts due to the intersection of race, class, gender, sexuality, age, ability, nationality, ethnicity, and political standpoint of the African American men are hardly analyzed in an intricate way. The research sheds light on the African American men from *The Son of Mr. Suleman* (2021), *The Good House* (2003), and *Riot Baby* (2020) which belong to three different genres of romance, gothic, and speculative fiction to examine how the African American men experience manipulation, violence, unjust legal treatment, and microaggression due to their intersecting identities by Whites and Blacks.

### 1.1. Intersectionality and Microaggression

The theory of “Intersectionality” focuses on the minor group of people who experience complex social inequalities and violence by the dominant group of people due to their overlapping social identities. Also, the approach helps to address and interpret the (mis)use of power by the privileged group against the unprivileged in various social settings. In 1989, Kimberle Crenshaw coined the term “Intersectionality” to describe how intersecting identities that include race, gender, and class correlate with the sources of oppression against black women in her article “Mapping the Margins: Intersectionality, Identity Politics, and

Violence against Women of Color". Including Crenshaw, other intersectional scholars such as Collins, Hooks, and McCall profoundly relate black women as the center of discussion while overlooking the fact that black men also have issues of intersectionality for which they experience systematic discrimination, violence, and injustice through different institutions that are heavily controlled by Whites regardless of gender.

Additionally, in the era of post-racism, traditional and explicit prejudice has transformed into subtle prejudice and thrown the minor group of people by the dominant groups so that their power of dominance is sustained. The subtle prejudice can be projected by insult mocking, and provocations by Whites which increase hostility. Insultations, mocking, and indirect humiliation fall under "Microaggression" which affects the behavior and psychology of the targeted group. African American men as the oppressed group deal with such prejudiced attitudes through microaggression.

## **1.2. Background of *The Son of Mr. Suleman* by Eric Jerome Dickey (2021)**

*The Son of Mr. Suleman* by Eric Jerome Dickey falls under the contemporary romance in which the African American protagonist Mr. Pi has experienced structural, political, and representational intersectionality due to his overlapping identities of race, gender, sex, class, professional designation, political standpoint, ethnicity, and nationality. His white racist colleagues regardless of gender are socially and politically privileged and do not miss any chance to use political influence to condemn Mr. Pi because they cannot accept that Mr. Pi has equal intellectual capacity and working ability as similar to them. Dr. Calhoun, one of Mr. Pi's white colleagues has manipulated him to have sexual intercourse with her. When he disagrees to fulfill her demands, she cannot accept rejection as she thinks as an upper-class attractive white woman, she can never be rejected by anybody, especially by a black man like Mr. Pi. Dr. Calhoun tries to misuse her power of social status, and politics to destroy

Mr. Pi's career and defame him by making false allegations against him to project his behavior as a sexual monster. This occurrence brings unfair legal consequences to Mr. Pi. Not only by Whites but Mr. Pi is also mistreated by black women as one of his colored female students tries to be intimate with him so that he will upgrade her academic grades. Additionally, Mr. Pi is also manipulated by his girlfriend so that she can have sexual satisfaction and secure a huge share of his inherited property. Therefore, professionally, personally, and legally, the intersection of his identities accelerates his experience of manipulation, violence, and injustice, and leads him to trauma.

### **1.3. Background of *The Good House* by Tananarive Due (2003)**

*The Good House* by Tananarive Due is a black horror fiction that emphasizes black cultural history, anxieties, and trauma experienced by black subjects. The novel explores how an evil spirit, Baka uses white/black racial dichotomy and chooses to turn into a white girl to attract the African American teenage boy, Corey Toussaint to accomplish an age-old revenge. The Toussaint family is the only black family in a white community in Sacajawea, Washington, in which Marie Toussaint is a voodoo priestess. Being a black African in a white neighborhood, Marie is criticized by white neighbors which evokes anger in Marie. She wrongly performs voodoo to take revenge on the neighbor that welcomes Baka who curses her bloodline for which her great-grandson Corey has to suffer. Additionally, the white teenagers of the neighborhood and school mock and humiliate Corey for his skin color, accent, and clothes. Moreover, he has been rejected by Sherita for his melanin. Being rejected by Sherita, mocked, and insulted by fellow children, Corey loses his self-esteem and becomes traumatized. However, Baka turns to a white girl to manipulate him for intimacy and to complete the revenge thinking that as a black African American teenage boy, he would do what she tells him to do. Thus, she uses sexual stigmas against him and racial dichotomy as

weapons to manipulate him to complete her revenge. Consequently, his race, gender, sexuality, ethnicity, and language intersect together forcing him to experience systematic segregation, manipulation, and violence.

#### **1.4. Background of *Riot Baby* by Tochi Onyebuchi (2020)**

*Riot Baby* is Tochi Onyebuchi's afro-futuristic speculative novel that delves into the prison industrial complex to show how structural racism, police brutality, incarceration, and advanced surveillance systems intertwine together to oppress an African American man, Kev. Kev's sister, Ella has the power of premonition by which she can see what unpleasant things will take place in the future. She has the power of astral projection through which she can travel across time where she witnesses the racial injustice and oppression against African American people by Whites. She compares herself to a Godlike persona as she says —"I am the locusts...I am the locusts and the frogs and the rivers of blood. I'm here now" (Onyebuchi 91). Her allusion to the biblical story indicates that she is the locust that projects the wrath of God to punish humans.

On the other hand, Kev desires equal rights, dignity, and opportunity to elevate his position in the society where he has been labeled as a brute and marginalized due to his race. Kev says, "I get to college and get my degree. I want to tell Mama that we're healing, that we're fixing what we can fix" (Onyebuchi 26). However, Kev grows up experiencing racial insults, poverty, police brutality, incarceration, and unfair legal practices that heavily limit his opportunity to live with freedom and dignity. He is insulted by the U.S. police and by the other black men in his neighborhood. In the parole community, Kev is completely under physical and psychological surveillance through modern techniques. The intersection of race, gender, class, ethnicity, and nationality of Kev accelerates his vulnerabilities and takes a great physical and mental toll in comparison to Ella.

### 1.5. Inclusion of female characters

African American women from the selected texts have been included in the analysis to compare the scale of vulnerabilities against African American men. To compare manipulation, discrimination, and violence due to intersectional identities, Mr. Pi's experience has been compared with Gemma Buckingham's from *The Son of Mr. Suleman*. Corey's experience is compared with Marie from *The Good House*. Kev's experience is compared with Ella from *Riot Baby*. The comparison of violence between African American men and women due to intersectional identities may have the essence of the "Oppression Olympics". The term "Oppression Olympics" was coined by Chicana feminist, Elizabeth Martinez in 1993 (Wikipedia). It is used to determine the relative weight of overall oppression on marginalized groups. In the research, the idea of the Oppression Olympics is incorporated not to project disrespect to African American women, but to highlight discrimination that formed because of intersecting identities of African American men which needs to be prioritized

### 1.6. Thesis statement

After reviewing the existing literature on racial oppression concerning intersectionality and microaggression, it is found that intersecting scholars including Crenshaw (1989), (1990), (2010), (2017), Collins (2015), Hooks (2004), McCall (2005), MacKinnon (2013) profoundly emphasized issues of intersectionality relating to black women whereas overlooked how African American men as the minor group deal with issues of intersectionality which push them into the edge and force them to experience oppression, manipulation, injustice by White women, man, and Black women. Besides, the scholars of microaggression solely focus on issues of black women and men who have different sexual orientations. In the existing research, issues of microaggression concerning heterosexual

African American black men are either neglected or deliberately bypassed. My intention in this research paper is to fundamentally investigate the underlying factors of intersecting identities and how they are connected to formulate violence and discrimination against African American men and how the men deal with microaggressions in relation to the three contemporary texts, *The Son of Mr. Suleman*, *The Good House*, and *Riot Baby*.

## **Chapter 2: Research Question**

The framework of intersectionality profoundly emphasizes the intersecting issues of colored women, even if the scholars of intersectionality such as Crenshaw, Collins, and Nash referred to the framework as an open-ended tool that has room to expand, adapt, and rethink to investigate the issues of oppression, discrimination, and vulnerabilities of the marginalized group. Additionally, according to the scholars, black men can only be discriminated against by Whites because they are black in race and share a lower class in social stratification. On the contrary, gender does not make any difference in forming biases against black men. They claim that black men exercise patriarchal power like white men to subjugate black women in which black men cannot be abused due to their intersectionality. Nonetheless, issues of intersectionality concerning African American men have been less emphasized compared to colored women in terms of practice within the literature. Intersectional scholars including Crenshaw, Collins, Hooks, and McCall have deliberately overlooked that black African American men can have intersecting identities that together form prejudices against them and broaden the scope of microaggressions that make them psychologically vulnerable.

The thesis argues that since intersectionality helps to understand how marginalized people encounter social inequalities due to their intersection of race, gender, class, sex, age, ethnicity, nationality, and age by the dominant group of people, African American men as a

disenfranchised group in comparison to powerful White Americans have experienced second class citizen treatment, violence, subtle prejudice, and inequitable criminal justice system due to their overlapping identities that leads the men towards psychological distress and when it surpasses their limit of endurance, their reactionary behavior becomes impulsive.

Therefore, the thesis addresses how the African American men, Mr. Pi from *The Son of Mr. Suleman*, Corey from *The Good House*, and Kev from *Riot Baby* grapple with issues of intersectionality and microaggression African American men and women, Ms. Buckingham, Marie, and Ella based on their overlapping identities for which they have experienced manipulation, brutality, subtle prejudice, and inequitable criminal justice by Whites and Blacks and what motives lie behind the dominant groups and whether or not the victim internalize impulsive or premeditated reactions to deal with intersectional microaggression.

### **Chapter 3: Literature Review**

#### **3.1. Research limitations of *The Son of Mr. Suleman*, *The Good House*, and *Riot Baby***

Despite diligent searching, no existing resource has been found regarding *The Son of Mr. Suleman*. As a result, the thesis is going to address manipulation, discrimination, and violence against Mr. Pi by Whites and Black women through the lens of intersectionality and microaggression along with his issues of psychological health. The limitations regarding *The Good House* are that the existing research overlooks the struggle of Corey, who is in misery due to his race, ethnicity, gender, sexuality, and age. Corey has been mocked and racially segregated by his fellow neighbors and how the demon, Baka uses racial complexity to trick him for which he loses his rationality is yet to be analyzed. Concerning the shortcomings of *Riot Baby*, the existing research has been carried out emphasizing the female character, Ella whereas being the riot baby, Kev's issues are not given a proper voice who has been

through subtle racism by his black fellows, police brutality before and after being incarcerated, and manipulated and wrongfully controlled by parole authority.

### **3.1.1. A Detail Literature Review of *The Good House***

Dianne and Due (2004) emphasize the author, Tananarive Due's inspiration for writing the novel in which Due shares that she blends gothic elements with the actual setting, Sacajawea, which used to be racist towards Blacks. A native American was slaughtered in the town of Sacagawea and the cemetery has been a target of racial hatred by the Whites who vandalize the cemetery of the dead, which results in a curse on the town. She emphasizes her female character in the novel, Marie Toussaint is the black pioneer in this town who becomes the victim of racial prejudice. After losing her temper, she performs voodoo to take revenge against the neighbors while disturbing Baka. However, Due only sheds light on how a black female character, she neither signifies the aftermath of Marie's death for which her great-grandson, Corey deals with more racial hatred than Marie nor emphasizes how he goes through racial trauma and how Baka uses the racial inferiority complex to trick he into taking revenge against Marie which eventually leads him to commit suicide.

### **3.1.2. A Detail Literature Review of *Riot Baby***

Even if Ill (2022) begins her discussion on violence inflicted upon Black bodies due to systematic racism and violence on Blacks by Whites in *Riot Baby*, she prioritizes discussing Ella's desire and accountability to stop the violence against Black Americans. As stated by Ill (2022), the history of injustice against Blacks fuels rage and determination in Ella to seek justice for the oppressed Blacks, and it is Ella to whom —“Black lives matter” (Ill 276-277). Instead of Kev's physical torture, psychological instability, and cultural violence against Whites, she discusses the suffering of Blacks in *Riot Baby* projecting Ella as a Messiah. Similar to Ill (2022), Hussein (2023) and Miles (2023) analyze the text from a feminist perspective while they heavily emphasize Ella as Hussein states —“Onyebuchi creates



his own version of the past and the future through Ella” because she observes the systematic racial violence of people that infuriates anger in her and gives birth to her power to see the future eventually self-determined her ~~to~~ be the agent of change” (Hussein 7). Besides, Miles states that Onyebuchi blends Afrofuturism with Black feminism because he portrays Ella as an exceptionally strong female black character because she has superpowers to fly, read minds, and see the future as if she is the chosen one to save the Blacks, and her anger toward her mother, Kev, and Black America (Miles 599). To Miles, Ella’s character development evokes the feeling that she will defeat the brutality done by Whites, however, he overlooks despite having such superpowers, Ella fails to bring any positive changes to stop violence against Blacks. Ill (2022), Hussein (2023), and Miles (2023) barely focus on the intensity of police brutality that Kev endures before and after being incarcerated, his physical and psychological torture by the U.S. police, the Jury, Parole authority, and black fellow neighbors. Even if Miles states the fiction includes physical and mental pain and violence that Black people have endured and the novel is a commentary on biopolitics<sup>1</sup> as it contains how technically Kev is controlled and surveilled by the law enforcement, he barely emphasizes adverse consequences Kev faces due to biopolitics and how it mentally and physically affects him.

Later on, Sadek et al. (2023) apply the ~~–~~“Theory of Mind”<sup>2</sup> (TOM) and the ~~–~~“Possible Worlds Theory”<sup>3</sup> (PWT) to discuss the internal message of *Riot Baby*. According to them, Ella is determined to take a protective stand for her community which belongs to the real world. Hence, the necessity and possibility (PWT) of change about racism, discrimination, and oppression in the real world are related to Ella’s will, attitude, and hope (TOM).

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<sup>1</sup> Michel Foucault, *History of Sexuality Volume 1: An Introduction* (135-137). Biopolitics is a concept by Foucault which functions through the power of technology to ensure not to kill the subjects but invest life through and through in the machineries of production as means of discipline and surveillance.

<sup>2</sup> Sadek et al. (2023) p 3: Theory of Mind (TOM) analyzes one’s hopes, wills, beliefs, thoughts, and attitudes.

<sup>3</sup> Sadek et al. (2023) p 3: Possible Worlds Theory (PWT) explains the ideas of necessity, possibility, and impossibility.

Nevertheless, Sadek et al. (2023) do not consider Kev's attitude, thoughts, attitude, and hope/TOM to be aligned with neither possible truth nor necessary truth/PWT, which is a limitation of their study because the feeling or attitude of Kev that has been formed due to racism and oppression by Whites, Kev's psychology represents those oppressed African American men in real world who are accused falsely, discriminated against Whites, and endure brutality while being imprisoned.

### **3.2. Research limitations of Intersectionality**

Scholars including Crenshaw (1989, 1990, 2010, 2017), Collins (2015), Hooks (2004), and MacKinnon (2013) highly emphasize black women's issues of intersectionality, whereas they accuse black men in general as sexual predators, blind practitioners of patriarchy, abusive and violent toward Black women. It is undeniable that black women have been abused by some black men but repeated reinforcement of negative images against black men in general conveys a fixed interpretation regarding the black men. With the passage of time, McCall (2005), Nash (2008), Cho et al. (2013), and Crenshaw (2017) assert that the framework of intersectionality can be reformed in its way of articulating the subject of analysis but the conceptualization of intersectionality remains the same that deliberately omit black men's issues of intersectionality as the minor group and their experiences of structural, political, and representational intersectionality that reinforce violence and discrimination by White men, White women, and in particular cases by Black women and men as well, which indeed is a limitation.

#### **3.2.1. Intersectionality: From Evolution till Practice**

In the article "Demarginalizing the Intersectionality of Race and Sex" (1989), Crenshaw highlights the need to internalize intersectionality for the betterment of colored women as they are excluded from traditional feminism as it is dominated by white women and anti-racism as it is dominated by black men. Crenshaw states, "I am suggesting that

Black women can experience discrimination in ways that are both similar to and different from those experienced by white women and Black men” (Crenshaw, 12). To justify her claims, she cites the cases of DeGraffenreid versus General Motors, Moore versus Hughes Helicopter, and Payne versus Travenol cases in which black female employees are discriminated against by employee practices due to their intersecting identities of race and gender that they are black and female and to show how courts fail to address intersectional problems of black women.

Nevertheless, Crenshaw overlooks how Black males are also discriminated against by White society where the courts do not bring justice to Black males. Black males have been convicted wrongfully by the U.S. court for years because they are black and men, which allows the white society to preconceived the idea that black men are bound to be criminalistics, therefore, they are criminals and require strict punishment. For example, Thomas Raynard James was exonerated in 2022 and has been sentenced to 32 years in prison for a murder charge that he had not committed (Bun, 2022). Additionally, Leonard Mack has spent 47 years behind bars and is a victim of the longest-standing wrongful conviction in the US for a rape in 1976 and exonerated in 2023 (Muzaffar, 2024). They are black, men, and impoverished. Thus, their race, gender, and class intersect together for which they experience bitter consequences even if they haven’t committed crimes. Crenshaw overlooks the experience, humiliation, abandonment, and the effect on the psychology, body, and social status of African American men who have been wrongfully convicted. Their race, class, sex, age, nationality, and ethnicity are the driving forces behind the misconduct.

Later, Crenshaw asserts –Black women sometimes experience discrimination in ways similar to white women's experiences; sometimes they share very similar experiences with Black men” (Crenshaw 12) by which she means patriarchal power because according to her, –Although patriarchy operates within the Black community, presenting yet another source of

domination to which Black women are vulnerable” (Crenshaw 25). However, Robert L. Allen says in his article, “Racism, Sexism, and a Million Men”, that “black men are not the enemies of women either black or white, however, it is the ideology of male supremacy injected by Whites that normalizes domination and violence to take control over others” (Allen 25).

Curry (2022) states that “the assertion of patriarchy by all men over women is vastly inaccurate because the feminist understanding of patriarchy emphasizes an ahistorical claim about patriarchy not being foundationally rooted in various differentiation between kinds of men” (Curry 530). Later, Crenshaw claims that analysis of sexism<sup>4</sup> and patriarchy can make real efforts to free black people (Crenshaw, 29) and the concept of intersectionality combines the issues of racism, sexism, and classism which will help to determine how black people are discriminated against by the privileged group, however, Crenshaw is deliberately highlighting only black women in the name of freeing black people by analyzing sexism and patriarchy.

To Crenshaw, black women are oppressed by the black patriarchy. She overlooks how black men become the victims of “Reverse Sexism”<sup>5</sup> in a society or a context where women (e.g. white women) occupy dominant positions if not absolute power like white men. As a counter to Crenshaw’s claim that black men are not discriminated against because of their race and sex against privileged groups of people, Tom Digby’s ideas help to show how black men are victims of racism and sexism. Digby answered that it is mostly white men who have racist and sexist attitudes toward black men so that they can secure their power and authority by making black men victims. He also emphasized that racism and sexism toward black men are often unrecognized because “it decontextualized and dehistoricized” (Digby, 3), which means black feminist critics tend to overlook it because, from the very beginning, they conceptualize except black women, black men cannot be victims of sexism. Therefore, it would not be appropriate to state generally that all black men practice the patriarchal norms

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<sup>4</sup> Britannica: Sexism is way to prejudice mostly women to maintain patriarchal domination of men.

<sup>5</sup> Reverse sexism is when men or boys are discriminated based on their sex.

to dominate black women because there are alternate situations where black women are more empowered in terms of social status, finance, and employment position than black men in the U.S. whereas black men are oppressed by Whites regardless of gender.

In the article, "Mapping the Margins" (1990), even if she claims that her arguments mainly focus on the intersectionality of race and gender that construct the social world for minorities, she overlooks that black men are also included in minorities and she ignores the issues of men of color while discussing multiple grounds of identities while only emphasizing how the intersection of race and gender harshly affects women of color. Regarding the three types of intersectionalities from structural, political, and representative standpoints, Crenshaw's structural intersectionality depends on spousal violence, rape, and remedial reform which are different from white women's experiences. While discussing structural intersectionality, she mostly focuses on women who are unemployed, underdeveloped, and poor black women who are often victims of physical assault and face routinized forms of domination by their abusive partners and are less likely to have criminal justice. Crenshaw's definition of this intersectionality should have been named 'Domestic' intersectionality' instead of structural intersectionality because structural intersectionality should include the issues faced by an individual when s/he is neglected, discriminated against, and systematically excluded from public and private institutions because of intersecting identities that reinforce barriers in the path of availing equal rights and opportunities. In structural intersectionality, except spousal violence and rape, Crenshaw barely discusses colored women who are burdened with poverty, lack of job skills, housing issues, and class oppression regarding colored women, and she omits the issues of black men who become the victims of structural intersectionality.

Regarding political intersectionality, according to Crenshaw, White feminism conducted by white women fails to interrogate issues of black women, while Antiracism

conducted mostly by black men fails to raise questions on patriarchal oppression against black women. In terms of legal justice, Crenshaw continues that the definition and evidence of rape trials often discriminated the women of color because colored women in trials are judged by the jury to determine if they were innocent victims or if they got what they asked for. However, she bypasses that when a black man is accused of sexual misconduct, the White jury's definition and evidence of rape change if the victim is a white woman. In such a circumstance, the accused black man neither gets the support of white feminists, radical black feminists nor from the antiracists because they are already suppressed by White racist power. In terms of "Representational intersectionality", she emphasizes how black women are the victims of stereotypes such as angry, rude, hypersexual, and promiscuous by the White society while omitting the representational intersecting issues concerning African American men who are stigmatized as potential rapists, murderers, robbers, abusive, and hypersexual because of their race, class, gender, sex, ethnicity, and cultural roots intersect.

Later on, Crenshaw (2010) refers to MacKinnon's work that Mackinnon's subjects are white but it is not illegitimate; rather her work is read as the advancement of the theory of intersectionality (Crenshaw 13). Referring to the "sameness/difference"<sup>6</sup> dichotomy, she said that black women are considered the group representatives as long as they play a supportive role towards racial narratives although it is controlled by men. Likewise, black women are addressed in feminist discourse in which they maintain differences with men, especially when they stand against white and black men for their rights. Nevertheless, Crenshaw overlooks the reverse image of the dichotomy between sameness and difference concerning black men as the subject. Regardless of feminism and racial feminism, black men suffer because feminist

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<sup>6</sup> In Crenshaw's view (2010), Black women fall between the sameness/difference dichotomy when black women stand with white females in feminism they have some similar ideas to white females regarding patriarchal domination, that creates collisions with black males because the race issue is muted. On the other hand, when black women stand with their communal men to raise their voices for racial equality, it collides with feminist perspectives.

scholars judge them as social threats, and also black men are put down by white men because of their race.

Furthermore, Crenshaw (2010) claims “Both historically and in contemporary terms, the objects of structural oppressions- the worker, the colonized, the immigrant, the slave, the Native, and the Negro have been imagined as male” (Crenshaw 35). Crenshaw omits the literary representations, activist representations, and political representations by black women in previous and contemporary times. For example, in terms of literary representation, in *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl* (1861) by Jacobs, *Sojourner Truth: A Life, A Symbol* (1973) by Painter, *Kindred* (1979) by Butler, *Harriet Tubman: The Road to Freedom* (2004) by Clinton, *A Mercy* (2008) by Morrison in which black women are given priority to show how they fight against colonization and slavery. Even if in the discussion Crenshaw mentions lynching as the symbolic manifestation that circled black men (Crenshaw 35), she overlooks Laura Nelson who was lynched in 1911 (“Lynching of Laura and L. D. Nelson”) despite being a black female.

Additionally, (McCall, 2005; MacKinnon, 2013; Carbado, Crenshaw, Mays, and Tomlinson, 2013) try to explain intersectionality as a method that identifies intersectionality as like a Venn diagram that spreads awareness regarding people's experiences depending on social forces and dynamics that have been previously overlooked. Even if MacKinnon's attitude towards intersectional inequalities sounds to cover the inequalities of the repressed and minor group of people (e.g. African American men and women in the U.S.), later she narrows her views on intersectionality as if it is only intended to support colored women who live on the edges. McCall also refers to Crenshaw, Hooks, and Collins repeatedly, she empathized only the women of color, negating the scope that the complexities would be applied to any group of minor people such as African American men in the United States. For example, how men of color face complex issues regarding identity that carve their lives

within society. Carbado et al. (2013) mention a good number of scholars like Dorothy Roberts, Sirma Bilge, and Priscilla Ocen who work on women's intersectional issues, only Paul Butler's work has been mentioned to show how intersectionality has been contributed and can be used to analyze black men's issues, which is highly disproportionate in comparison to black women study.

Although (Nash, 2008; Carbado, 2013; Cho, Crenshaw, and McCall, 2013) discuss intersectionality as an open-ended investigating tool to examine overlapping identities and the framework should be replaced or at least applied in conjunction with [fill in the black] (Carbado, 3) which implies the theory has been overly invested in a specific subject which is none other than “women of color”, and it also symbolizes the narrow representation of the framework. Also, Cho et al (2013) state, “We called attention to the broad spectrum of intersectionality studies” that will demonstrate further elaboration within and across the discipline while emphasizing the margins (Cho et al, 24). However, Barbara Tomlinson (2013) argues that there is no need to change the intersectional framework. In the name of rethinking and application, the framework omits the intersectional issues of Black men as a minor group.

Unlike Crenshaw, Collins (2015) defines intersectionality concerning class, race, gender, sexuality, ethnicity, nation, ability, and age that help to shape complex social inequalities but she strongly associates “women’s studies, gender, cultural studies, media studies, and other interdisciplinary fields, as well as within the humanities, history, and similar disciplines with a strong narrative of power relations and social inequality” (Collins, 7-8). Even if intersectionality is a tool for social change, she mostly connected it to twenty-first-century feminism. (Carastathis 1-5). Nonetheless, the ways in which Collins (2015) and Crenshaw (2017) define and conceptualize intersectionality are very evident in the statement that the framework is not only limited to women of color but goes beyond particularism,



however, most of the work on intersectionality is to analyze how women of color are dealing with intersectional issues which show how particular manner the framework has been used. Also, Grzanka (2018) claims that psychological analysis relating to intersectionality mostly revolves around women of color (Grzanka 29). Over the decades, intersectional scholars deliberately bypass the issues of intersecting identities of African American men that create unpleasant experiences of violence, discrimination, injustice, and psychological distress for them, although they claim the framework can be more sophisticated through adaptation and adoption, which shows limitations of the interpretation within the framework.

### **3.2.2. Existing Research on Black Men's Issues concerning intersectionality**

Paul Butler (2013) sheds light on the intersectional issues of black men to examine their experience of discrimination because of their race and gender living in a racist society that is dominated by Whites. Butler states, “Black males also have an intersectional identity as they are Black and male which formulate unique experiences of discrimination” (Butler 24). According to him, black males are burdened more than black females in the United States because of the intersection of race and gender that highly affects their educational achievement, participation in the labor market, and risk of incarceration compared to African American women. To exemplify, issues of African American men in the U.S., Butler states despite the unemployment issue being very high in the black community, black men accept jobs that require them to work under very hazardous conditions. Moreover, in terms of health care, black men die earlier than black women. To explain the invisible burdens on black men, Butler restates what DuBois said that the African American community is at war with poverty, and men are supposed to figure out how to deal with it which intensifies their burden. Butler finds that in terms of social, educational, and economic outcomes black men are systematically discriminated against compared to black women by Whites, whereas African American men are incarcerated at higher rates than Whites and black women.

Furthermore, Butler cites MacKinnon who states that gender divides power within a system, hence, women are systematically subjected to men regarding credibility, resources, and physical insecurity, and black men tend to be abusive to women (Butler 22-23). Since black feminist scholars constantly blame black men for advancing patriarchal rules given by white men, Butler tries to dismiss the claim of MacKinnon by quoting Joshua DuBois, an executive and former government official, that society functions initially by the hand of the patriarch, whether white or black. Since historically blacks are stymied by Whites, black males are suppressed in terms of occupying the utmost social power and they are "poorer than any other group in the United States" (Butler 2). Even though Butler emphasizes black men's intersectionality, his quantitative research neither includes other intersecting factors such as class, sexuality, age, ethnicity, nationality, language, religion, and political ideology nor sheds light upon African American literary representation

Tommy J. Curry (2021) criticizes the arguments of Crenshaw and Hooks against black men's experience of discrimination and violence concerning intersectionality, where he states the theorization of intersectionality has been done in such a way as if it has a fixed perception regarding the formulation of all black men as oppressors and criminals to dominate, abuse, and threaten women. In Curry's view, this attitude of intersectionality functions as a proclamation rather than an explanatory theory because the idea of intersectionality predominantly emphasizes the subordination of women as a structural and prime feature whereas black men have always projected through negativity propaganda.

By mentioning Frank Rudy Cooper as one of the theorists of intersectionality, Curry (2021) says that Cooper thinks the identity of black men is formed by imitating white men and by following their cultural norms and practices so that like white men, black men can portray the same patriarchal image on the black community to control the women. Bell

Hooks got the inspiration from Cooper and she claimed that the history of racism and Jim Crow segregation made black men hypersexual and forced them to form phallic identities.

According to Hooks (2004), "Before any young black male acts violent, he is born into a culture that condones violence as a means of social control, that identifies patriarchal masculinity by the will to do violence. Showing aggression is the simplest way to assert patriarchal manhood. Men of all classes know this." (Hooks 62). As per Hooks's remarks, black men born in a culture where they see patriarchal practice as a means of violence and a way of taking control over women and social resources, the practice of being patriarchal inspires black men to show how violent they can be to demonstrate their power and ability to their subordinates. Bell Hooks mostly emphasizes that Black masculinity is the replica of white masculinity, however, she does not include those black women who follow beauty standards set by the white culture and want themselves to look like white women. Some black women are copying the beauty norms of white culture. For example, they are bleaching their skin to lighten their skin complexion. They straighten their hair and turn it blond. Some of the black women are wearing blue contact lenses. Also in literary expression, such as Toni Morrison's *The Bluest Eyes*, Pecola Breedlove strongly aspires to blue eyes like white girls that eventually drive her insane. Enhancing beauty is not an issue, however, considering this particular beauty standard as the key to getting acceptance in white culture is highly problematic. If Hooks is claiming that black men are copying white masculinity to take charge of women because they do not have anything new to offer to make their masculinity unique, she avoids talking about those black women who are trying to transform themselves into white women to get love, attention, and appreciation.

### **3. 3. Research Limitation of Microaggression**

People with intersectional identities experience diverse forms of discriminatory behavior or environmental interactions that communicate hatred in an explicit or inexplicit manner. Most of the research on microaggression has been surveyed quantitatively emphasizing mostly college-going LGBTQ+ students and colored women. However, in terms of African American literary representation how microaggression affects Black men and how the Whites as the dominant group intentionally or unintentionally take advantage, express grudges, and discriminate through microaggression is yet to be explored. Along with this, the thesis is going to address the motives of the perpetrators despite the triviality and psychological effects of microaggressions on the recipients and their coping strategies.

### **3.3.1. Existing literature on Microaggression**

(Sue et al. 2008) confirm racial microaggressions are more harmful to people of color because it is hidden and intentionally done through unintentional nature. Later, Nadal et al. (2015) quantitatively approach intersectional microaggressions to understand the influence of race, ethnicity, gender, sexuality, and religion on people of the minority to examine whether people with multiple identities could identify intersectional microaggressions in their everyday lives. The study mostly addresses issues of women who have been exoticized and excluded from the mainstream for their appearance whereas African American men are not properly addressed. However, Nadal et al. (2019) identify that individuals who become the victims of intersectional microaggression become emotionally, cognitively, and psychologically unstable and diagnosed with PTSD and physical health consequences. Kanter (2020) identifies that there is a lack of linking bias to microaggression for which the recipients are more often questioned than those who did it. This tendency keeps the offenders in the dark who offend black people.

### 3.3.2. Intersectional Microaggression

Intersectional microaggression assesses subtle prejudice and its impacts across the broad range of intersectional identities that take place regardless of time and place. For example, racial jokes, offensive behavior, mockery, inappropriate attributions, and receiving poorer service fall under subtle discrimination. While reviewing existing literature on intersectional microaggressions, a tendency has been identified that scholars of microaggression mostly carry out research on intersectional microaggression concerning college-going colored students (Solorzano et al., 2000; Minikel & Julie, 2013; Morales, 2014; Murty et al., 2017), the LGBTQ+ community (Meyer, 2003; Balsam et al., 2011; Nadal et al., 2016; Vaughn, 2017; Scheim and Bauer 2019; Singh et al. 2021; Craig et al 2023), and how colored LGBTQ+ students (Seelman et al. 2017 & Woodford 2017). While linking intersectionality to microaggression, they barely prioritize African American men who experienced racialized sexual harassment, and unusual behavior due to having multiple overlapping identities. However, from an intersectional perspective, Williams et al. (2023) study the experiences of microaggressions, attributions, and impact among young adults (612 women and 320 men) who belong to sexual, gender, ethnic, and racial minorities in the United States. Nonetheless, male participants are less than women and the researchers recruited participants by focusing on the consumption of tobacco. After reviewing existing resources, it has been found that the discussion on intersectional microaggression is heavily dependent on racial stereotypes, insults, and alienation of black students and black women who have different sexual orientations. However, the scholars bypass African American men from different contexts who become the victims of microaggression due to having intersections of race, gender, class, political ideology, age, heterosexuality, and cultural identity.

### 3.4. Addressing the gap

The selected primary texts, *The Son of Mr. Suleman*, *The Good House*, and *Riot Baby* lack a thorough investigation of African American men's issues relating to intersectionality and microaggression because intersectional scholars including Crenshaw, Hooks, Collins, and McCall bypass black men's victimization within the contemporary theorization of intersectionality. According to Collins's view, other than women of color, no one has experienced the issues of intersectional identities like them, which is not correct to be assumed because black men too have intersectional identities for which they are victimized, however, it has not been profoundly emphasized like intersectional issues of black women. Additionally, the scholars point at black men as the oppressors who subjugate black women and assault them under the umbrella of patriarchy, which is not true. They omitted black men also face racism and reverse sexism that together accelerate the notion of oppression, discrimination, and injustice. Besides, Collins-Anderson et al. (2022) suggest research on the psychology of black men concerning the ground of intersectionality to examine the interplay of different social identities and experiences associated with inequalities that have not been analyzed within African American literature. Hence, the psychological turmoil faced by the Black-American male characters concerning the primary texts needs to be analyzed in the study of microaggressions. Therefore, this thesis addresses issues of intersectionality and microaggression of African American men that perpetuate injustice, violence, and oppression in relation to *The Son of Mr. Suleman*, *The Good House*, and *Riot Baby* and the victims coping mechanisms against microaggression.

## Chapter 4: Theoretical Frameworks and Concepts

#### 4.1. Intersectionality

Intersectionality is an analytical framework that helps to understand how an individual or people from a marginalized community encounter discrimination at various levels due to his/her or their intersecting identities that are formed as Collins (2015) and De Vries (2015) suggest through the combination of race, class, gender, sexuality, age, nationality, ethnicity, (dis)ability, professional designation, language, and political standpoint. The theory of intersectionality primarily drew attention because of Kimberle Crenshaw in 1989 to shed light on the treatment of African-American women based on their intersecting identities. She states that intersectionality is a lens to analyze "where power comes from and collides, where it interlocks and intersects" (*Kimberle Crenshaw on Intersectionality*). Structural intersectionality deals with how social systems or structures systematically oppress and marginalize underprivileged people because of their intersecting identities. Another type is representational intersectionality, which focuses on stereotypes and misrepresentations concerning the victim's intersecting identities. Additionally, political intersectionality emphasizes the intersection of power, politics, and identities of marginalized people in relation to law enforcement, the criminal justice system, and civil society. When underprivileged people are stuck between two or more political agendas, they face challenges in making decisions whereas their actual needs and issues remain unaddressed. While discussing political intersectionality, Crenshaw mentioned Devon W. Carbado's concept of "Colorblind Intersectionality" which helps to produce a cognizable social category in which whiteness is invisible, unarticulated, or rarely expressed (Carbado, 2013). Colorblind intersectionality gives rise to partiality that ignores and minimizes the role of race and spreads universalism to justify and rationalize injustice. Through the concept, the idea of formal equality has been portrayed in law and advancement. In the thesis, colorblind intersectionality is used to analyze how powerful people are using it as a disguise to

manipulate people so that powerful people can discriminate against them while making it difficult to recognize subtle racial profiling. To explore nature and the differences of inequalities, McCall (2005) uses an intra-categorical approach that deals with the diversity and complexity faced by a single group that may include the same racial people of different genders and vice versa. The inter-categorical approach investigates how different groups are affected by inequalities and differences based on intersectional identities.

#### **4.2. Microaggression**

The concept of microaggression was introduced in the 1970s by Black psychiatrist Chester Pierce and now it has become an intense debate among critics to analyze how microaggression affects people who belong to the minority (Kanter 2020). Microaggression is the new fashion of racism against people of color, which resembles a subtle but more dismissive manner of insulting people who are framed as subordinates through derogatory words, phrases, hints, and gestures. Such attitudes fall under post-racism which refers to subtle racism which is different from traditional racism but can be projected in different manners in covert forms. Since microaggression contains mostly subtle insults and is hard to identify separately, white Americans take advantage, exchange grudges, and discriminate in the name of triviality. Among the three forms of microaggression, the first one is microassault which refers to an explicit verbal or nonverbal attack, while targeting a person by purposeful actions, calling derogatory names, and hints at their appearance (Dovidio & Gaertner, 2000; Sue et al. 2007; 2008). This type of interracial interaction is consciously made so that the victim feels colored or oriental, inferior, and not welcomed. Secondly, microinsult is a hidden insulting message and can be done through verbal, nonverbal, or environmental actions to the people of color to emphasize that Blacks have no



ability or quality to achieve anything good. Thirdly, microinvalidation deals with the exclusion, negation, or nullifying the psychological thoughts and feelings of Blacks.

### **4.3. Foucauldian Concepts of Power/knowledge, Governmentality, Biopower, and Biopolitics**

According to Foucault, "There is no power relation without the correlative constitution of a field of knowledge, nor any knowledge that does not presuppose and constitutes at the same time power relations" (Foucault 27). Power and knowledge are intertwined together in the idea of Foucault where there is no center to locate the hierarchy of power, knowledge is created, shaped, and spread by power within discourses to control the lives of human beings, thoughts, and actions. Thus, power becomes omnipresent in social institutions through which truths are created and communicated through language to shape social relations and disciplines.

The art of "Governmentality" emphasizes the relations of power between the state and its people. According to Foucault, governmentality is an ensemble formed by institutions, procedures, calculations, and tactics that include complex exercises of power to conduct the population as its target (Foucault 107). Through governmentality, the government emphasizes the creation of "free subjects" who are obliged to exercise freedom and facilities within governmental objectives which indirectly force people to do what the authority wants them to do. This is a way through which the government shifts power from the central authority and distributes it among the population.

Biopower is a systematic approach towards technology to control, regulate, and subjugate the body, behavior, and life of the population to maintain social order to fulfill the expectations of society without questioning the established ideologies within the

society. According to Foucault, social institutions such as government, military institutions, monetary institutions, social administrations, law, and religion cannot have the same rigorous practice and procedure that claim knowledge is independent, rather these institutions work as behavior control technologies that work as a series of webs. Biopower controls human bodies through “*Anatomo politics of the human body*” which contains the disciplinary power and “*Biopolitics of the population*” through diverse disciplinary institutions. *Anatomo politics* involves techniques to discipline the body of the individual through different institutions like schools, prisons, and hospitals in which the body has been subjected to various practices.

Biopolitics of the population consists of all sorts of techniques to control and surveil them through data which also describes the strategies of administration that try to optimize the life of the population through “propagation, births, and mortality, the level of health, life expectancy, and longevity” (Foucault 139-140). Biopolitics emphasizes how political power intersects with the biological life of the population through biometric identification. Thus, biopower allows the state to produce social categories by controlling and regulating the population and eventually creating a society where the population subscribes to ideologies that shape them according to the desire of the state.

#### **4. 4. Fanonian Ideas from *Black Skin, White Masks***

In *Black Skin, White Masks*, Frantz Fanon thoroughly discussed the deep-seated effects of racism and inferiority complex through language, and intimacy on colonized Blacks in their body, mind, and psyche. Primarily economic instability is due to unequal access to education, limited opportunity, and discriminatory policies in the fields of work, which evoke an intense sense of inferiority in comparison to Whites. As stated by Fanon, language is the tool through which the process of colonization and racial superiority has been

started, spread, and injected into the veins of black people. In the mind of black people, to access the resources and facilities and the weight of civilization, they need to be equal to Whites in which the language of the superior would be the key to unlock the door of opportunity because they think that language resembles power and culture that allow Blacks to stand along with the Whites.

Furthermore, Fanon states that black men tend to be involved with white women through romance or love because it allows the men to perpetuate colonial revenge through violence on the women. If a black man is loved by a white woman, it proves that the man is worthy of white love which eventually transforms him into a white man. Fanon cites an autobiographical work "*A Man Like Many Other*" by Rene Maran in which Veneuse is a colored man who cherishes affection for Andree, a white woman. However, Veneuse seeks assurance from his friend, Coulanges that Veneuse is ready to proceed with Andree because, with the passage of time, he has become a European man and is expected to love a European woman, even if he is a Negro by root. Fanon relates the dilemma of Veneuse with Germaine Guex's concept of "Abandonment neurosis" that one suffers from neurosis caused by the bitter experience of being abandoned in the past that makes it difficult to believe that one is worthy of love and eventually increases anxiety and low self-esteem which leads one to be aggressive and evokes devaluation of self (Fanon 72-73). Nevertheless, Fanon shares the idea of collective catharsis which is a way of releasing fear, pity, anger, and repressed emotions (Fanon 145) that a society must have a channel to release but in a white-dominated society where Blacks are repressed by the Whites hardly get the way of releasing their aggression.

## **Chapter 5: Analysis of *The Son of Mr. Suleman***

The intersecting identities of an individual play a significant role that shapes the experience of inequality, discrimination, and violence against him/ her by the dominant group. The parameters that belong to personal identity are race, class, gender, sex, age, financial status, nationality, ethnicity, language, and religion. Similar to personal identity, professional identity forms with occupation/ expertise in the specific field. However, one's political standpoint emphasizes his/her political ideology concerning the nation which influences one's personal and professional life. This section addresses how Mr. Pi endures humiliation, threat, and violence due to his intersecting identities in comparison to Ms. Gemma Buckingham which further turn into microaggressions that reinforce a traumatic life for him.

### **5.1. Overlapping identities of Ms. Gemma Buckingham and Mr. Pi**

Ms. Gemma Buckingham is the passionate girlfriend of Mr. Pi who cunningly avoids straightforward answers regarding his identity, ethnicity, age, and cultural roots because she is ashamed of her true being and heritage and she fears being treated insignificantly in comparison to Whites. For instance, about her identity, she states, —“Joy-seeking woman filled with never-ending curiosity” (Dickey 200). Nevertheless, she introduces herself as Gemma Buckingham, who is an agnostic, divorcee, middle-aged mixed-race woman who was born in Brixton, London but recently has moved to Memphis to heal from a breakup where she has fallen in intimate love with Mr. Pi but shockingly, an uncut Skype call reveals her real name which is Akua. In the early stage of her life, she struggles for accommodation because she is an impoverished and mixed-race woman. Due to the intersection of class, age, race, and gender, she experiences racial hatred at a young age for which she is forced to leave her flat, treated as if she does not belong to society, humiliated by Whites, and forced to live in hostels while starving with the threat of being incarcerated (Dickey 651-652). This is how she becomes a victim of structural intersectionality.

The intersection of race, class, gender, and sexuality makes her extremely concerned about appearance and beauty. Mr. Pi states, —She had colored and changed her hairstyle. Her naturally curly hair was brunette, straight and silky, rich, healthy, and reflective, super-glossy, in a half-up bun hairstyle. She wore plum lipstick, mascara, and a wash of bronzer. She was a brand-new kind of beautiful in clothes unfamiliar to my eyes; a style and creator more British” (Dickey 527). She hates to be associated with the features of colored women because, to some extent, she is not proud of her race, culture, and ethnicity as it reduces her value as a human being. Additionally, her English accent is stronger than her Afro accent and sounds more unapologetic. Nevertheless, in terms of sexuality, Ms. Buckingham introduces herself as a demisexual<sup>7</sup> as well as a sapiosexual<sup>8</sup> who falls in love with Mr. Pi.

Regarding her professional identity, she is the CEO of an unnamed company that helps her to maintain a lavish lifestyle and a perfect figure so that her race, gender, and cultural roots do not create obstacles in the path of her success. Her master suite is equal to the house of Mr. Pi (Dickey 166), which denotes that she is not a struggling woman due to her intersecting identities and her position as a colored woman is far better than Mr. Pi’s. Ms. Buckingham strongly idealizes and admires Meghan Markle, who is the Duchess of Sussex. As a mixed-race woman, Meghan Markle self-identifies herself as a feminist who becomes a new royal representative. Ms. Buckingham states, —When I see the Duchess of Sussex, I see myself. She’s my mirror” (Dickey 274). Weidhase (2021) states that —Markle is seen to successfully embody a version of modesty through her style and articulations of feminist politics” (Weidhase 8). Markle reminds Ms. Buckingham that her struggle with youth was similar to Markle, which is why, Ms. Buckingham blindly idealizes her. The influence of Meghan Markle dominates Ms. Buckingham’s bold feminine lifestyle, choices, and decisions as if she sees her reflection in Markle and her racial struggle in a White society. On the other

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<sup>7</sup> A sexual orientation in which people feel aroused after they form an emotional bond with their partners

<sup>8</sup> A sexual orientation in which people feel aroused with highly intelligent people

hand, Ms. Buckingham lacks respect, love, and passion towards racial struggle by Blacks as she believes –Nothing good comes with being called Black. Black means nasty, dark, gloomy, obscure, sad, tragic, disastrous, terrible.” (Dickey 201). This is how Ms. Buckingham’s political standpoint collides with her race and gender shaping her experience and ideology concerning the colored community.

In comparison to Ms. Buckingham, being a light ebony brown and the son of an absentee father, Mr. Pi Maurice Suleman is a thirty-one-year-old African American man living in Memphis, Tennessee, who endures the bitterness of poverty from childhood to youthhood. As stated by his mother, –My son worked three jobs, did that when he was in high school to help all of us out. Never complained, not one time... Then he worked over at Southgate at Piggly Wiggly the third shift so he could go to classes at UAN in the day” (Dickey 324). Since he was not born with a golden spoon in his mouth, he has no other choice left as a black man but to find the key to unlock the door of success so that he can beat the starvation of life. Despite struggling with the edges of the lower class, his philosophy is –Work harder, get smarter” (Dickey 29). Even if he is chained by deprivation, he believes in working hard which will bring him success one day. Being a colored impoverished man, he is struggling with his intersecting identities of race and class.

In his professional life, Mr. Pi feels honored for his academic achievements and occupation as he becomes an adjunct professor at the same university from which he has graduated. As a result, in social meetings, he proudly introduces himself as –Professor Pi Suleman, UAN” (Dickey 17). However, despite ensuring equal academic intelligence and qualifications to the White employees, Mr. Pi’s professional progress is highly influenced and controlled by his White colleagues. For example, he is often intentionally taunted by his White colleagues on campus for his language and accent, even if he speaks clearly to make himself as understandable as possible. To elaborate, when he talks, the white colleagues

observe him in a certain way as if his uttered words have no vowels to portray their ways of articulating words as more refined. As discussed by Frantz Fanon in *Black Skin, White Masks*, the process of colonization and racial superiority has been started, spread, and injected into the veins of black people through the articulation of language, to access the resources and facilities and the weight of civilization, Mr. Pi needs to be equal to Whites in which the language of the superior would be the key to unlocking the door of opportunity because it resembles power. Thus, Mr. Pi dislocates from his cultural roots to transform himself into a new man to have honorary citizenship. He states, —“We code-switched and talked properly when we were too close to our other colleagues” (Dickey 44). As per Fanon, in such a situation, the black man behaves differently with a white man and with another black man (Fanon 17). Likewise, Mr. Pi reshifts his accent whenever he talks to other African American colleagues. For instance, —“That’s for *sho. Mane*, she keeps giving me trouble on a good day. *Mane*, she snapped her *motherfuckin* fingers at me” (Dickey 44). It signifies a change of tone and expression of Mr. Pi when a colored man accompanies him. To Fanon, even if the black man adopts the language of the superior and assimilates with the culture to prove his existence and intellectual excellence, he is still considered inferior and not accepted in the white culture. This is how his language and cultural roots intersect each other for which he switches his code in front of Whites not necessarily because he enjoys sounding White but to avoid unwanted humiliation even if the situation remains unfavorable for him.

Nevertheless, the matter of regret is that despite being a Professor at the university and a novelist, Mr. Pi is plagued with financial difficulties until he inherits the wealth of Mr. Suleman after his death. For example, he uses a second-hand car and takes years to pay off the seller. The reason for his financial instability is his unequal salary compared to his White colleagues. Despite fulfilling the requirements of the university and being a great, honest, and knowledgeable Professor, he is still appointed as an adjunct Professor, and nobody knows

except the university authorities if he is going to be appointed at the university permanently or not. However, white adjunct professors do not have to endure hatred, insults, and unwanted situations like Mr. Pi and this is where his race, ethnicity, and nationality collide.

In terms of political standpoints, Mr. Pi supports those leaders and activists who fight for Black lives and rights that have been wrongfully repressed by White supremacists. He embraces the ideology of Malcolm X, Nelson Mandela, and Barack Obama, however, he does not support the treatment Donald Trump offers for African Americans. To elaborate, Mr. Pi states “In my heart, I marched like I was Malcolm X” (Dickey 260). As an influential leader, Malcolm X encouraged Black people to be politically involved to make rightful demands for equal rights. He raises his voice against racial hatred and assault by the Whites on Blacks. Jones (2020) states Malcolm recognizes Christianity imposed by Whites on Blacks not as a guide towards another world of heaven but as a strategy that may not exist but rather keeps them away from current needs (Jones 5-6). As a consequence of White manipulation, Malcolm X refers to them as White devils. As stated by Jones (2020) Malcolm suggests African Americans especially men use firearms to fight racial injustices which would help to affirm Black manhood (Jones 9).

Likewise, Nelson Mandela speaks up for colored people to ensure human rights, which have been snatched by Whites. Ndebele (2020) states that according to Mandela, white supremacy is nothing but dismantling his struggle which resembles the struggle of colored people against racism. Besides, Johnson (2011) states that Obama has culturally embraced African American culture for which he has increased White House functions that highlight African American art, music, cuisine, literature, and so on (Johnson 11). All three leaders and activists believe in restoring human rights, security, and opportunity for underprivileged Blacks which evokes fuel inside Mr. Pi.



Even though Mr. Pi follows the ideology of Malcolm X, Mandela, and Obama, his White colleagues blindly ideologize Donald Trump who has been tagged as racist time and again. Mr. Pi states that “A fake and a fraud had a baby and called it Donald. He’s a backstabbing Twitter-addicted racist” (Dickey 41). The former U.S. president has come into the limelight for his racist remarks before and during the time of his presidency, even if he claims himself to be the least racist supremacist. Lopez (2020) sheds light on how Trump sounded racist over time that he violated the Fair Housing Act by refusing black tenants that there was no vacancy in 1973. Additionally, by criticizing a Black accountant as “Black guys counting my money! I hate it...I think that the guy is lazy. And it’s probably not his fault, because laziness is a trait in blacks. It’s not anything they can control” (Lopez). Furthermore, in 2018, pointing to Haiti and African countries, Trump remarked “Why are we having all these people from shithole countries come here?” (Lopez). Even if Mr. Pi is politically subjugated, “Obama’s excellence” and “Trump’s ignorance” are two contradictory things to him because Trump has neither empathy for colored people, nor does he try to change the fate of the unprivileged Blacks for any better, rather, he only seeks power to rule on them. This is how Mr. Pi’s race, class, and political beliefs collide with his White colleagues.

## **5.2. Black against Black: Intersectional dilemma of Mr. Pi versus Black women**

It is undeniable that the intersection of race, class, sex, and other social identities shape the experience of violence and discrimination differently in the life of a colored woman, however, colored men are not should not be counted outside of the boundary of intersectional dilemmas because their overlapping social identities shape their lives in a different manner, which is mostly overlooked by intersectional scholars. It is also overlooked how a colored woman can play the role of conspirator against a black man where his identities intersect and create difficulties in his life.

In the case of Mr. Pi, his race, class, sexuality, gender, financial status, and political beliefs intersect and clash with Ms. Gemma Buckingham and a black female student of Mr. Pi, Komerobi which eventually puts him in an ethical dilemma. Ms. Buckingham uses him as a trump card for her sexual satisfaction and monetary benefit. To elaborate, Ms. Buckingham has stereotypical thought that since Pi is an African American young man, he is born with excellent capabilities of pleasing women physically. As a sapiosexual and a demisexual woman, after reading erotic parts in the novels by Mr. Pi, she wants to enjoy a wild intimate relationship and desires citizenship in America. She states, —Profssor, I think I like you. You are different...Something about you makes me want to let go of my inhibitions and find a way to disport myself with you in very naughty ways.” (Dickey 129). Even if she accompanies Mr. Pi to his father’s funeral in California, she demands sexual pleasure from him. As stated by Mr. Pi, —She wanted to sight-see, have fun, have sex” (Dickey 382). As confessed by Ms. Buckingham, —I wanted him. Only him. It was a sex thing at first... We deserve sex with good-looking men. I read his books and was mentally aroused. But I only wanted him. Not his baggage...Just the fantasy” (Dickey 535-537). Ms. Buckingham’s love and passion for him are expressed in the past tense which signifies she is no longer interested in his matter.

Besides, Mr. Pi’s American nationality and financial status evoke a desire in her for which she manipulates him so that she can get monetary benefits and citizenship in the U.S. When she gets to know about Mr. Pi’s inherited wealth, she becomes jealous of Mr. Pi’s inherent fortune and she plans to have some of it for her business. Ms. Buckingham says to her secretary, —I worked for my money. His father died and he was handed his. On one hand, I was happy for the professor, and in the next breath, I resented that as well...I made so many sacrifices to achieve my dreams and my lover inherited a bloody fortune overnight” (Dickey 532). Ms. Buckingham tricks Mr. Pi by not having any contraceptives during intercourse and

accompanying him with his family matters to become trustworthy and to make him feel that she wants to start a family and spend the rest of her life with him. However, as stated by Mr. Pi, —She made me feel like I was an African king, a man destined to rule over Memphis. It would cost a million dollars for her to stay here and be my queen.” (Dickey 469). A Skype call reveals that he has been used by her as a source of sexual pleasure and citizenship in America.

In contrast to Ms. Buckingham, Mr. Pi is heartbroken because he genuinely loves her as he states, —I was a BFM in search of romance and love” (Dickey 164)... —I loved her and watched her not love me” (Dickey 530). Even when he meets her for the first time, he thinks she is the missing piece in his life and he has been searching for a woman like her who will understand him. Nonetheless, at a point, Mr. Pi realizes that she fabricated her identity and relationship, which emotionally breaks him. As he states, —Gamma Buckingham had come into my life as suddenly as an earthquake, and now I was riding the aftershocks” (Dickey 551). Mr. Pi is a man of African ethnicity, and American nationality, who is blessed with inherited wealth and love with a colored woman. The intersection of his race, class, gender, sexuality, and nationality attracts Ms. Buckingham for which through manipulation and fabricated love she tries to make him her puppet makes him emotionally distorted.

Furthermore, Komorebi tries to trap him emotionally and sexually to upgrade her academic grade. Since both Komorebi and Prof. Pi share the same African American identity, race, and culture, and both of them are opposed to White supremacy for which she tries to convince him by saying if he upgrades her grade, she might do something extraordinary to piss Whites off which would be beneficial for Black as well. Despite telling her to mail formally and contact Prof. Pi during office hours, she appears to him at odd hours to meet her demands but he dismisses her request for which she tries to establish an intimate relationship so that Pi changes her grade. Being a black woman, Komorebi cultivates stereotypical

thoughts that black men are hypersexual and they can transform impossible into possible to have sex. As stated, “I am a Black woman willing to do whatever it takes not to fail... I checked out your social, Professor. You don’t have a woman. Was thinking that maybe we can get away from everybody, get away from UAN, meet downtown, hook up... We could get a cocktail right there at the bar, chill with the rich folks, watch that cute little duck show, then find a more private spot to conduct our business” (Dickey 75-78). Komorebi uses the sexual stereotypes against him that depict him as a sexual beast. As emphasized by intersectional scholars such as Crenshaw, Collins, Hooks, and MacKinnon, Black men are sexual predators who have a hunger for sex, Mr. Pi could have had sex with Komorebi. Nevertheless, his stake in Komorebi’s demand is to do the hard work in studying to achieve the desired grade. He suggests to Komorebi, “When you have skills, fame will find you” (Dickey 28). He does not accept Komorebi’s offer to be involved in an intimate relationship and saves his morality. After all, the social identities of Mr. Pi such as his race, sexuality, gender, ethnicity, nationality, and culture clash with Komorebi. Consequently, Mr. Pi has been a victim of representational intersectionality and has been used as a tool for ensuring sexual pleasure and man of means by colored women, Ms. Gemma Buckingham, and Komorebi.

### **5.3. White Despotism: An extreme manipulation, violence, and injustice against Mr. Pi**

Mr. Pi's intersecting identities make him the victim of white despotism by Dr. Stone-Calhoun, the Judge of all Judges, and the U.S. police. To elaborate, Dr. Stone-Calhoun is the most beautiful, power-hungry, and privileged white woman on campus. Besides, she is the wife of the Judge of all Judges whose wealth is boosted by power. She occupies a position as one of the higher authorities at the university where Mr. Pi works as an adjunct professor. To fulfill her dark fantasy related to intimacy, she targets Mr. Pi because she believes since he is a black African American man who is financially challenged and supposed to be a sexual stud, she can please him with costly gifts and he can satisfy her sexually. Therefore, she traps

him by becoming Secret Santa who buys him a new iPhone, iPad, and MacBook Pro to accomplish her sexual desires about which he is completely unknown in the first place. As a result, he ensures her to repay bit by bit, however, Calhoun wants him to repay her in another way. Consequently, Mr. Pi has been forced and threatened by her to be intimate and meet her wild sexual desires.

The reason behind accepting the gifts is Mr. Pi's impoverishment before inheriting his father's wealth. He believes the gifts are the outcome of Dr. Calhoun's greatness. To him, she is helpful so that he can upscale his social status closer to the privileged group of people because, from the very beginning of his life, he has witnessed poverty. Necessity pushed him to the bottom of the social ladder. Being a black man, he has been neglected and less facilitated. He states, "I graduated from UAN, a Black man from Memphis educated in an underfunded public school in a neglected zip code, became a professor at a school that was forced to integrate my skin folk during civil rights" (Dickey 425). Being a professor and a novelist, he has yet to overcome his financial difficulties because opportunities for Blacks in the U.S. are very shallow, struggling, and limited in comparison to White upper-class people. Due to his poor living conditions, he has been indirectly looked down upon by Dr. Calhoun. To illustrate, she states, "I hear you live in a small house in South Memphis" (Dickey 39). By saying this, she wants him to feel the scarcity of resources for living a standard life that eventually leads him to inferiority. Additionally, as discussed by Frantz Fanon in *Black Skin White Masks*, black men do not receive similar acceptance in white society as they desire regardless of their efforts which evokes an inferiority complex. Primarily economic instability is the center that cultivates an intense sense of inferiority in comparison to Whites.

However, he refuses to receive the gifts any longer as soon as he finds the real motive of Dr. Calhoun because she admits "I want you. I desire you sexually. And I always get what I want. Always" (Dickey 187). She believes in "quid pro quo" which means something for

something. She is ready to take care of all the needs of Mr. Pi and she asks him to take care of her sexual needs because her husband fails to satisfy her.

Nevertheless, Dr. Calhoun fails to digest the refusal from Mr. Pi who is racially, financially, socially, and professionally inferior to her and is not supposed to say no to sex offered by a white woman as he is supposed to be a sexual freak. As stated by her, “I’m the bitch many men would love to have...I’m offering you an affair that many would die to have. And yet you refuse to capitulate. I sold my soul to the devil a long time ago” (Dickey 187). It is Dr. Calhoun’s preconceived idea that every man, especially Black men, wants her in bed, which is wrong in the case of Mr. Pi that leads him to be a victim of representation intersectionality as his race, gender, sexuality, and ethnicity collides with social stereotypes against him. She threatens him that his personal and professional life will turn into a disaster as he has rejected her invitation. As an extension, she forces him to attend the University event to make him more “Socialized” because she assumes he is uncivilized. Otherwise, he will not get his payment. Moreover, she threatens him with her political influence as she states, “Look at me now, dining with kings and queens... Know your value, know your worth, adjust that attitude accordingly.” (Dickey 96). Also, Mr. Pi asserts that she “Eats lunch with senators, does dinner with presidents” in the White House (Dickey 372). The White House symbolizes the powerhouse for the white supremacists, especially for Dr. Calhoun and the Judge. The house is the official residence and workplace of the president of the United States. In Mr. Pi’s context, it is occupied by Donald Trump, who is a white supremacist and was labeled as racist several times in 2019. Although the White House symbolizes freedom, democracy, and leadership, it is for the White’s benefit such as Dr. Calhoun and the Judge who refer to the White House to threaten Mr. Pi and to show their political support is beyond his imagination.

Besides, with the help of the U.S. police and political influence, Dr. Calhoun stops and frisks Mr. Pi's car in the middle of the road at night so that she can get intimate which makes him extremely traumatized. He states, —Roll down my driver's-side window. Music off...Prepared to be guilty of breathing while Black...They saw Dr. Stone-Calhoun, saw her wave and smiled like all was fine like they could run off and mind their business until further notified" (Dickey 62-65). The U. S. justice system is corrupted by White supremacists and it hardly matters to the system whether or not a black person has done something wrong or has been a victim of the situation. In the eye of justice, whites are the victims, and blacks are criminals because Whites resemble purity and blacks are filthy. Refusal of her proposal brings serious legal issues in his life because the police and the justice system will never trust Mr. Pi's words. Even if Mr. Pi states, —This is past my office hours." She sang, —Time for some quid pro quo." I shook my head. —No." —You know that at this point you don't have a choice" (Dickey 64). Since Dr. Calhoun is a white woman, she is racially, socially, and politically powerful, therefore, his sexual consent does not exist and he is as equal to a sexual object that can be (ab)used wherever and whenever. On the other hand, he is a black, African American, and man, and he knows the police around them who have a preconceived idea that he is surely a rapist, and they are going to take action against him if he does not listen to her. In cases of rape, black men are always wrongfully convicted as guilty. This is how race, gender, sexuality, and political ideology clash with White's political power where Trump has been ruling, not Mandela or Obama.

As discussed by Fanon in *Black Skin, White Masks*, black men often intimate with White women to portray themselves as worthy of white love, which would bring respect, acceptance, and power similar to White elites. Black men want to have sex with White women because it makes them equal to White men, hence if not epidemically but internally they consider themselves as Whites. Therefore, Mr. Pi should have taken this offer from Dr.

Calhoun that would allow him to live a lavish life like the upper-class Whites. He could have had intercourse with her but the quote signifies that he has no intention to have an intimate relationship with Dr. Calhoun to achieve acceptance and power in White society.

However, the scenario is different from what Fanon has emphasized. Despite knowing that his professional and social life will be destroyed by Dr. Calhoun, if he is not sexually involved with her, from the car incident, he tries to avoid her in every respect. He states, “I told her what she was asking was way out of line. The beauty queen from Brownsville couldn’t believe my fantasy wasn’t to have a woman of her stature slob on my knob to boost my ego.” (Dickey 66). Additionally, he always asserts that he has no such intention for her. He states, “I never came on to Dr. Stone-Calhoun. I never put my hand in the small of her back. I never touched her on her knee. Never winked at her. Never leered. Never complimented her” (Dickey, 124). It is Dr. Calhoun, a white woman who has a secret sexual desire that she wants to accomplish as she continues-

“Now, next time I want dinner on you and the rest of the night on top of me.”

“No.”

“Quid pro quo.”

“For the last time. No.”

“Quid pro quo.”

“Look, cut me some slack. You’re the same age as my mother.”

“But I’m not your mammy. (Dickey 393).

Although he tries to ignore her calls, texts, and Emails, she keeps sending him inappropriate pictures which are deleted by him as soon as he receives them because he has no intention to either support or continue an intimate relationship with Dr. Calhoun. Therefore, the



interpretation of the intersectional scholars, Crenshaw, Collins, and Hook about a black man as a sexual predator and potential rapist does not align with Mr. Pi's case.

Unfortunately, Mr. Pi becomes the victim of the manipulative criminal justice system that tries to be colorblind and gender-blind by giving the equal floor to Dr. Calhoun and Mr. Pi but when he takes legal action against Dr. Calhoun and presents messages and the video of sodomizing that results from Dr. Calhoun's threats, she fearlessly points at him and manipulates the Jury with fake witnesses that he has assaulted her and threatened to do bodily harm to her if she does not follow his commands. She has kept it secret as she wants to save her reputation, career, and life. On the contrary, Mr. Pi remarks on the biased criminal justice system and states, "If a Black man walked into that judge's courtroom accused of stealing half a honeybun to feed his starved child as his first offense, he could end up gone for two decades plus ten" (Dickey 25). In terms of the justice system, Black men mostly have been convicted as guilty and they have been wrongfully incarcerated by the Jury. As stated by Alexander (2010), "New Jim Crow jury serves as a black man in the Jim Crow era—discrimination that is perfectly legal, because it is based on one's criminal record. This is the new normal, the new racial equilibrium" (Alexander 191). According to Alexander, in comparison to previous years, black men are more racially controlled and discriminated against by privileged groups that have been normalized in the criminal justice system in the United States of America. This is bypassed by the intersectional scholar, Crenshaw that when a black man is accused of sexual misconduct, the jury's definition and evidence of rape change if the victim is a white woman. As a consequence, Mr. Pi has been accused of raping Dr. Calhoun.

Even if he is not found guilty, the verdict is unfair to him because law enforcement is flexible regarding the conviction for her because of her race, gender, class, religion, nationality, social influence, and political standpoint in comparison to Mr. Pi. Being free

from all the charges, she has placed herself on the front page with the president of the U.S.A that signifies such legal issues do not make any difference to her life. The criminal justice system of the U.S. does not register her name as a sex offender. Hence, the intersection of his race, gender, sexuality, and political power intensifies his bitter experience of injustice in comparison to Dr. Calhoun.

Regarding the Black man's intersectional issue, Crenshaw, Collins, and Hooks claim that black men likely do not have issues of intersectionality because they cannot be the victims of prejudice due to their gender in such a society that is controlled by patriarchy but they are discriminated against because of their race and class. However, in the case of Mr. Pi versus the Judge of all judges, Mr. Pi receives highly apathetic behavior from the Judge because his race, class, gender, ethnicity, professional designation, and political ideology intersect and clash with the Judge. Despite knowing that her wife is chasing Mr. Pi to meet her sexual desires, The Judge threatens Mr. Pi by saying, "On the bench, I know some good killers. Real good. One phone call and they're all heading in your direction to do my dirty work to stay on my good side...If I was you, boy, I'd pack up and leave before the next sunrise, if not sooner." (Dickey 432). He gives a life threat to Mr. Pi to make him feel inferior and insecure as an African American underprivileged man who has no political assistance in comparison to him. This is how as a white supremacist, he demonstrates the power of his status and politics to perish Mr. Pi.

Furthermore, the U.S. police stop and frisk Mr. Pi based on the assumption of robbery done by him. It is a result of white-made stereotypes working as a driving force that projects a Black man to be a criminal, robber, alcoholic, rapist, murderer, and drug dealer who wants to escape from the police. Based on assumptions, the police humiliate him by spitting on his hair and pointing a loaded weapon at him. The intersection of his race, class, gender, and ethnicity reinforces the stereotypes that make him feel helpless. In contrast, when the Judge

of all Judges breaks the speed limit while a crowd of students scatters, the police remain silent as if they saw nothing. Although the law is supposed to be equal to all, it is made not to protect White supremacists like Judge and Dr. Calhoun. The lawmakers become the lawbreakers and the application of the law becomes inconsistent. This is how the intersection of his race, class, gender, ethnicity, nationality, profession designation, and political standpoint reinforce manipulation, violence, unfair treatment, and injustice in his life.

#### **5.4. Microaggressive attitudes: Motivation of the dominant groups, Counter-reaction of Mr. Pi**

As a black man in a white-dominated society, Mr. Pi has to swallow intentionally delivered racist remarks by the privileged Whites which have been presented in such a manner as if it is unintentional. Regarding microaggressive attitudes, even if his colleagues termed their behavior and expression as “harmless teasing/ harmless fun”, Mr. Pi states, “A rope is harmless until it’s around a man’s neck. Your insults have strangled me.” (Dickey 424). Living among the White supremacists, Mr. Pi often becomes the victim of microassault (Dovidio & Gaertner, 2000; Sue et al. 2007; 2008) that includes an explicit verbal or nonverbal attack through purposeful actions and calling derogatory names to attack personally. To illustrate, Dr. Calhoun and the Judge refer to themselves as good and pure Christians who are different than Mr. Pi and his racial people, which is to insult Mr. Pi by labeling him as a heathen who does not have knowledge about religion and does not worship, therefore, he is unworthy to stand beside the original Christians. She states, “Are you in doubt that I am a good Christian? My people were the original ones” (Dickey 40). This is how by differentiating themselves in a certain way, they try to exclude Mr. Pi and make him an inferior African American man who should be aware of his lower position in a White society.

Besides, in the event of socializing, one of the White colleagues, Prof. Thor laughs and tells him to “eat with the Christians at Chick-fil-A to stay alive” (Dickey 60). The hidden meaning of this is to be grateful that as a black man, he got the excellent and rare opportunity to spend time with Whites who are Christians, hence, original and pure. Additionally, Mr. Pi has been derogatorily referred to as 'boy', 'black from Memphis', and 'nappy-headed nigger' by his colleagues and the Judge that belittle his position at work and insult him as an African American man. These words directly demonstrate racial slurs against Mr, Pi to create a negative image of him. Especially, the term “Nappy header nigger” is associated with African African curly hair, which is used by Whites as a tool to inferiorize him. According to Dovidio & Gaertner, 2000; Sue et al. 2007; 2008, this type of interaction is consciously made to make the victim feel colored or oriental, hence, inferior and not welcomed, and sometimes such micro assaults sound life-threatening. For instance, as stated by the Judge, “Let me go to the buffet, find a big sharp knife, and cut me a big chunk of pie.” (Dickey 42). “Pi ” and “pie” sound very close and by “the chunk of pie”, the Judge indirectly referred to Mr. Pi. The latent meaning of this is to warn Mr. Pi to be aware of his socio-political and professional status and not think of creating a mess with the Judge, otherwise, like the chunk of the pie, Mr. Pi will be eaten by the Judge. In other words, he will be facing serious consequences that would make his life as miserable as hell, which also foreshadows potential violence.

Furthermore, Mr. Pi becomes the victim of microinsult which is a hidden insulting message that is delivered through verbal, nonverbal, or environmental actions (Dovidio & Gaertner, 2000; Sue et al. 2007; 2008) to signify his incapability to achieve anything that makes him equal to Whites. Based on race, culture, and education, Dr. Calhoun tries to dismantle Mr. Pi’s intelligence and professionalism. As a consequence, she orders him to socialize with other Whites. To Dr. Calhoun, black men are uncivilized and do not know how to live with civility in White society. She ignores Pi’s skills of adaptability, communication

skills, morality, and ethics as she states, “Black unemployment is at its lowest levels in history. Some people have never learned how to say thank you when someone ordained by God helps them...My president did this for you.” (Dickey 37). To her, Black people should worship the White President of the U.S. like worshipping God because as God becomes merciful to the sufferers, the president is merciful enough to Black people by providing them jobs, otherwise, it is not Mr. Pi’s cup of tea to secure a position of a university professor.

Besides, Prof. Thor makes fun of Mr. Pi while smiling and raising a glass of alcohol towards him when he is speaking with another black colleague. As stated by Prof. Thor, “Well, if it ain’t Nelson Obama and Barack Mandela, dressed up and socializing with top-notch colleagues at last” (Dickey 46). Professor Thor ridicules black political leaders referring to Nelson Mandela and Barack Obama as Nelson Obama and Barack Mandela to provoke Mr. Pi that he is unworthy and has no role to play in socializing events like Nelson Mandela and Barack Obama have no active role to play in the Trump era. Moreover, Dr. Calhoun and the Judge make an excuse to stop Mr. Pi by saying that they require the help of an expert opinion of him. As per Devon W. Carbado’s (2013) concept —“Colorblind Intersectionality” helps to produce a cognizable social category in which whiteness is invisible, unarticulated, or rarely expressed. Referring to Mr. Pi’s opinion as an expert opinion, Dr. Calhoun and the Judge pretend to prioritize Mr. Pi, although they do not acknowledge his intellectual excellence because they consider him inferior to them.

Dovidio & Gaertner, 2000; Sue et al. 2007; 2008 also came up with another form of microaggression, which is termed microinvalidation, in which the victim's thoughts and feelings have been excluded, negated, and nullified by the offenders. Mr. Pi's vulnerability and feelings are nullified and ignored by Dr. Calhoun. Despite knowing Mr. Pi has just lost his father, she negates his feelings and demands for intimacy. As stated by her, “Return my call after you bury your pappy” (Dickey 279). She does not think how he would feel when

she has used the term “pappy” to refer to his late father. The articulation of Dr. Calhoun’s language not only nullifies the feelings but embeds her superiority over Mr. Pi, which makes him a modern sex slave.

Through microaggressive events, the offenders want to evoke a wave of extreme anger and frustration in Mr. Pi but he tries not to lose his temper as long as he can in most cases. He internalizes three strategies to deal with microaggressions which are ignoring the mean comments and actions, self-manipulation by saying he would forgive the Whites, and verbal confrontation against the offenders. For example, he switches codes when he works with his white colleague to make the environment more melanin-free. Indirectly the White offenders influence Mr. Pi through microaggressions so that he comes out of his own culture and starts to embrace their culture and norms, which would make them more noteworthy. Additionally, Mr. Pi self-manipulates himself to cope with microaggression as he states, “I was rapidly running out of Black forgiveness coupons... We moved on” (Dickey 46). He convinces himself that the taunting or judgment resulted from misunderstanding and misconception that influence and shape what the offenders believe and perceive against him, therefore, they can be forgiven rather than stretching the matter. Hence, he has been using the self-manipulation strategy to control his anger and counteractions.

Nevertheless, being inhumanly treated, at a point, he loses his temper and becomes aggressive to some extent. Sometimes, he gets triggered and starts shouting, “Mofofucka, you betta ‘pologize’... He bumped into me. He didn’t apologize. That offends me” (Dickey 293). The pile of repressed anger burst from a relatively small event of staring. In most cases, such repetitive microaggressive remarks and actions are delivered by the White elites, who belong to the upper class, are labeled as pure Christians, and have the ability to conduct and influence the law against Mr. Pi to break his self-esteem, humiliate him, and disregard his

existence as a human being. This is how his race, class, sex, religion, nationality, ethnicity, ability, political ideology, and culture intersect and clash against the White elites.

### **5.5. Mental Dilemma of Mr. Pi:**

The biased unequal treatment and violence due to intersectional identities and microaggressions caused Mr. Pi's Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder, which evokes a fear in him that he will not get better as long as he is among White racist people. He states, "I might not ever recover from the PTSD it has forced me to tread in on a daily basis" (Dickey 296). To elaborate, the forceful sexual misconduct, biased criminal justice, harassment, and threats by police and White colleagues, destabilize his mental health for which Mr. Pi subconsciously imagines the worst consequence he would face if the potential threats turned into reality. For example, he lives in solitary and becomes thanatophobic which evokes an intense fear of being killed anytime, anywhere by the Judge for which he starts to live in insecurity. Consequently, he carries two shotguns and one handgun while ensuring the main door and windows are double-locked, closets are checked, and the extra security system is on for safety. Fear of being killed, frightening thoughts, anxiety, frustration, loneliness, and flashbacks of the unwanted events further cause insomnia make him mentally unstable to think properly as he states, "I'd become a new slave...I'd be criminalized, same as a boy minding his own business after buying a pack of Skittles, called savage and other terms used for wild animal" (Dickey 390). Besides, he refers to America as Alcatraz to him. The prison, Alcatraz metaphorically resembles the solitary life of Mr. Pi where unfair treatment, systematic discrimination, and subtle but intentional threats by white privileged groups are inescapable.

## **Chapter 6: Analysis of The Good House**

It is undeniable that Marie has been victimized for her intersection of race, gender, sexuality, and cultural roots but in terms of age, Corey as a black boy has been heavily targeted, marginalized, and burdened in comparison to Marie. Due to the intersection of his race, ethnicity, gender, sexuality, and age, the evil spirit, Baka manipulates him to take its revenge, white neighbors humiliate him and also White police and sheriffs refuse to investigate the causes behind Corey's mysterious suicide.

### **6.1. Overlapping Identities and Intersectional Issues of Marie Toussaint**

Marie Toussaint is an African American middle-aged woman who has knowledge of voodoo and used to work in Mary McLeod Hospital as a trained nurse. She has earned a nursing degree in the medicinal qualities of regional herbs which complements her voodoo practice. Being the only Black female in the entire White-dominated community, Marie's race, class, gender, ethnicity, and profession intersect which makes her a victim of structural intersectionality. To elaborate, despite her excellence in nursing, she was appointed as a cook and housekeeper in the house of a White owner, Elijah Goode. Marie states, "He had reservations about hiring a colored cook and housekeeper to live in his home—that there were no colored people in Sacajawea" (Due, 464). Her professional qualifications do not matter to Goode because she is an impoverished black woman, which offers him a chance to master his superiority. Also, Goode does not provide her a room in the main house; instead, she has to live in a small, windowless room in the attic, where the summer heat is nearly unbearable whereas the entire well-furnished house remains empty. Through this ill-treatment, Goode tries to establish a new phase of the master-slave relationship to control Marie. However, when Marie offers to make him famous and rich in the community through her voodoo and helps Goode to overcome his physical difficulties with her special herbs, Goode changes his approach towards Marie from his colored maid to his wife. Hence, this



marriage has been used as a tool for both of them as Marie needs a secure place to lead her life and Goode needs voodoo-related favors.

Even if Marie helps her White neighbors with the magical herbs and saves their lives from catastrophic situations, they resent her due to her race, ethnicity, and marital status. As stated by Marie, “Gunshots boomed before our house for hours, shattering windows...I saw how our door had been savaged by buckshot and lead” (Due 468). They cannot digest the fact that being a black African woman with a daughter from a previous husband, Marie is married to the richest white man in the community which upscales her financial status overnight and they become envious. Moreover, they think white is the sign of purity and spiritual cleanse which makes them the authentic, superior, and purest Christians but Marie's racial and religious identity are below in comparison to Whites. They outburst with rage because they think that the intervention of a Black African voodoo priestess will make their community filthy which will bring negativity and chaos. This is how Marie's race, ethnicity, religion, and profession collide which results in violence and vengeful attacks against her.

Besides, due to her intersecting identity, she has to deal with legal interventions through Goode's brother after his death. His brother tries to take control of the property of sixty acres. Even if she presents the legal documents to the court, the court listens to Goode's White brother because it is stereotypically injected in a racist society that being a Black African American woman, Marie is assumed to be a skillful liar who tries to create fabricated stories to take advantage of Goode's death and take control over the property. Thus, Marie's race, gender, and class intersect which has escalated legal issues for her.

## **6. 2. Microaggression and Reaction of Marie Toussaint**

Due to the intersection of race, gender, and sexuality Marie becomes the victim of microassaults and microinsults. In detail, she has been referred to as a “colored gal” and “colored pioneer” by the White people of the neighborhood which is an intentional attack on her race. Although unintentionally, her White husband also demeans her racial identity through his statement as he says to her that he knows Marie’s mind and soul are as white as his (Due 466). Even if the statement sounds like an emotional stance to Marie, it contains a subtle expression of racial prejudice. He tries to explain that he knows the dark melanin of her epidermis does not represent her inner soul. He associates Whiteness with calm and on the contrary, he associates blackness with impurity. Marie states, “I struggled to hear the words as he meant them despite the way they rankled me” (Due 466). Through such a remark, either knowingly or unknowingly, Mr. Goode brings the whiteness/ blackness dichotomy to explain the purity of the inner self.

Besides, she has been subjected to terrible glares from her neighbors because they label her as a promiscuous woman which makes her a victim of representational intersectionality. Even if she lives in the attic which is not the main part of the house where Mr. Goode lives, the neighbors are brutally judgmental and label her lustful (Due 518). If she is not a black heterosexual woman, she would not have to absorb this kind of prejudiced behavior. This is how her race, gender, and sexuality intersect together which causes microaggressive attitudes by the White people. In terms of reaction to the microaggressive attitude, Marie decides to harm people through her voodoo magic. She confesses, “I evoke the lwas and bakas who would give me the power to harm others as they had harmed me” (Due 468). Marie does not immediately react to enmity, rather she takes time to think of how through her black magic she can demolish the White neighbors, therefore, her response to the racial biases is highly premeditated.

### **6.3. Overlapping Identities of Corey and Intersectional Microaggression**

Marie's great-grandson Corey becomes more vulnerable in comparison to Marie, especially in terms of age. Although he inherits his father's genes for height and musculature, he is only a seventeen-year-old black teenager living in a white-dominated society in Sacajawea, Washington. In comparison to Marie, Corey faces complex microaggressive behavior which includes microassault and microinsult by White teenage boys and girls due to his intersection of ethnicity, sex, and gender. The offenders assume it would be easy to humiliate him because they are almost the same age and if anything goes wrong they will bypass it by referring to those humiliations as leg-pulling. In school, Corey has been mocked for speaking English because he sounds African rather than American in terms of accent. Also, due to his race, ethnicity, and accent, his white schoolmates and their parents avoid him while giving him cold stares. Even if the school is supposed to bring equality among the students regardless of gender, class, and race, racial diversity and African masculinity segregate Corey. As stated by the narrator, "Girls who used to pass Corey started noticing him...these white girls looked at him like, Wow, imagine that, a real Negro" (Due 158). As an African American boy, the school-going White girls think he flaunts his masculinity reinforcing his nature of hypersexuality. The girls exoticize him as if he is of a different species who is different from them. This makes him a victim of microassault and representational intersectionality due to his race, gender, sexuality, and ethnicity.

Besides, Corey has been referred to with derogatory terms such as "nigger", "nigger Jim" and "nigger brother with the fucked-up hair" by the White teenagers regardless of gender which portrays strong prejudice against him that resembles micro assault. The term "Nigger Jim" reminds of the novel *Adventure of Huckleberry Finn* when Jim escapes from Miss Watson's enslavement but is captured by Silas Phepas and Huck in a letter writes, "Miss Watson, your runaway nigger Jim is down here two mile below Pikesville" (Twain 216). Jim has been segregated from his family and while being enslaved, he has been oppressed and

dehumanized time and again. Even though Huck initially thinks that all his sins are forgiven and he is at peace after writing the letter, he is reminded of how good Jim was and tore the letter right away. Likewise, Corey has been segregated from the White-dominated community and he has been animalized, mocked, and insulted. Unlike Huck, the white offenders do not consider how calm Corey has been to them but they continuously remain harsh to him. When he walks across the street, the offenders often show him their fingers and he gets to hear from them that “It’s good to finally get some variety around here” (Due 160) that means Corey’s dark melanin brings diversity among the Whites which is not welcoming for him, rather they look down upon him.

Even if Corey tries to behave sophisticatedly after such insults, one of the offenders, Bo provokes him and says, “You sound white, but a skinny nigger’s all I see”... “Are you trying to be a smart-ass? You supposed to be better’n me?” (Due 403). To Bo, only Whites can behave and talk in the most refined manner which is likely to be impossible for Blacks because the Whites assume them as ignorant, which is an example of microinsults. The teenage offenders internalize the seed of prejudice that normalizes such aggressive attitudes against Corey. He ends up living in a town where his neighbors consider him a strange alien who all of a sudden invades their planet and the cold way they gaze at Corey as if he is dirty, barbaric, and uncivilized due to his race and cultural roots, hence, his cultural and racial identity intersect for which he has to experience extreme animosity.

#### **6.4. The Reaction of Corey Toussaint on Microaggressive Attitudes**

To tackle the microaggressive attitude, Corey remains silent initially. For example, he avoids their presence and does not look at them. Even though he does not involve himself in fighting with them verbally and physically, he releases his anger, frustration, and desire through rap songs written by him. His articulation of words portrays his inner voice of rage as

he sings, “I’M A REBEL, don’t misspell, an’ I don’t take shit...and my beats don’t quit...Five-O? You best just go. / You ain’t got shit on me. / This niggah don’t subscribe to slave mentality” (Due 156). Even if he verbally does not resist, his inner self screams telling that he is a rebel, not a slave, and the overpowering attitude of the oppressors cannot push him downwards. He recites his favorite rap which he has named “Rebellion”, which projects his suppressed rage and an image of his resistance against racial hatred and humiliation.

Sometimes, he tries to moderately confront the offenders by saying, “You better learn some respect” and leaves the place. However, the offender time and again provokes him to respond aggressively which highly triggers Corey. For example, Bo asks, “Where you think you’re going? Did I say you could go anywhere?” (Due 404) which projects a latent master-slave relationship between Bo and Corey that without Bo’s permission, Corey is not allowed to move. This time Corey confronts Bo and states with a strong voice, “I ain’t scared of you. I don’t sound black enough for your ignorant redneck ass” (Due 440). To confront him, Corey associates blackness with evoking fear which is a stereotype that black men are beasts and, therefore, they are supposed to be dangerous. Even if Corey has been non-violent, the constant influence of the offender fuels rage in him as stated by Alexander (2010), “Not surprisingly, for many black men, the hurt and depression gives way to anger” (Alexander 174). Corey internalizes racial and gender stereotypes under pressure to deal with the offenders. The constant provocation of the White offenders resulted in Corey’s incoherent behavior towards them, although, it is the consequence of counter-reaction which is initiated by White offenders. Thus being mocked, insulted, and systematically ostracized by Whites in school and community due to Corey’s intersecting identities makes him a victim of structural intersectionality.

### 6.5. White Devil vs. Black Man: Representational intersectionality of Corey

Due to Corey's colored race and African cultural roots, Sherita rejects his proposal but does not return the ring Corey has proposed to her with. Realizing how Corey's mother, Angela is emotionally attached to the ring, he decides to bring it back to his mother by performing a voodoo ritual following Marie's manuscript of magic spells, "The Book of Mysteries". Nevertheless, due to not performing a cleansing ceremony before the ritual, his prayers awaken Baka, the evil spirit, who becomes a beautiful attractive young white girl. The narrator states, "A tall teenage white girl had dashed out of the woods toward them, her long pale dress flying behind her" (Due 416). Her beaming smile, glowing skin, shiny blond hair, and toned figure attract Corey to her. He becomes mesmerized by her beauty because he has never experienced such a beautiful white girl who shows interest in him.

Nonetheless, being a white-female figure, she gives sexual connotations to Corey through dreams in order to raise his sexual desires. He becomes extremely fascinated by Baka because he has never felt the love of a White girl. It would prove that he is worthy of White love which eventually transforms him into a white man as Fanon explains. Likewise, the colored man, Veneuse, Corey cherishes affection for Baka and eventually ends up masturbating thinking to get love, appreciation, and acceptance like a White man. According to the narrator, Corey's dream and desire for intimacy with Baka resulted from "an eager agony" (Due 482), which intensifies what Fanon refers to as collective catharsis. Fanon states, "If we want to answer correctly, we have to fall back on the idea of collective catharsis. In every society, in every collectivity, exists-must exist- a channel, an outlet through which the forces accumulated in the form of aggression can be released" (Fanon 163). In Corey's instance, the channel to release repressed emotions and aggression is through masturbation thinking of Baka. In his case, catharsis derives from his rage and segregated life due to the abandonment of his White schoolmates and fellow teenage neighbors. The feeling

of disorientation, humiliation, and rejection formulate an agony inside Corey. Besides, Sherita's rejection makes him think he is not worthy of love which is another reason for his agony. As a teenager, he could not deal with the rejections that led him to adore Baka in every way. Hence, his repressed anger, frustration, rejection, and desire for love and acceptance collectively work behind his cathartic expression.

However, it is Baka's trick to manipulate Corey by representing herself as an attractive woman because when Marie refers to Baka, it is a spirit of neither a male nor a female. Due to the stereotypical thinking that Black men feel sexually attracted to White women. Since Corey is a young African American teenage boy, Baka chooses to be a white woman to attract him to her. Hence, his race, gender, sexuality, age, and ethnicity collide for which he has been aligned to such stereotypical thought. Besides, Baka knows that Corey has been refused by Sherita and mocked by other White girls, so she takes the chance to comfort him and gain his trust. Even if Baka influences Corey to be intimate with her, he tries to shake away the thoughts before he gets excited (Due 540). His desire is not limited to sex but he loves Baka unconditionally as he states, "I want to see her every day as soon as I wake up. I want to take her away and send her to school, whatever she wants. I dream about her. I'm writing poems for her" (Due 541). Nonetheless, Baka stares at him with a private message and she states, "I came here so you would kiss me. What are you waiting for?" (Due 481) which reinforces her invitation of physical attachment. Consequently, Corey has started to face a psychological issue that Fanon cites as "Abandonment Neurotic" (Fanon 72) in *Black Skin, White Masks*. It is an anxiety derived from abandonment that leads Corey to feel inferior which resulted from the experience of low self-esteem, cruelty, and bitterness of Whites and abandonment. The previous experience of devaluation of self resists Corey accepting the love of Baka. As a result, he starts seeking the assurance of his only White friend, Sean, whether or not Baka is enthusiastic about him and whether he should accept her

love. This event resembles Germaine Guex's concept of "Abandonment neurosis" that Corey suffers from alienation and the bitter experience of being abandoned in the past by Sherita, schoolmates, and White neighbors.

Furthermore, Baka uses racial resentment to manipulate Corey against Bo so that he makes a major blunder and suffers from guilt. She knows that he has repressed anger against Bo because oftentimes he mocks and insults Corey publicly. To get a human sacrifice wrongfully by Corey, Baka behaves exactly the opposite of Bo as she praises and thanks him for helping her which eventually creates a strong positive impression in Corey's mind. Besides, she bruises her face and makes her eyes red with tears and her lower lip with blood spots with her magic to be a victim of rape. Baka makes a story of physical assault and with her power, she makes Corey visualize that once Bo brutally raped her which intensifies and awakens repressed anger in him against Bo. She shows him "Bo's hand ripping at her dress, burrowing between her breasts, groping and pulling at her soft flesh...Bo thrust his hand between Becca's Legs" (Due 550). Visualizing the rape scene, Corey can not resist but starts to fight with Bo even if he continuously refuses the allegation against him. At one point, Baka's power makes Bo "sink into a manhole-sized pool of mud" (Due 560). She manipulates Corey through Bo as she has a preconceived idea that as a straight black teenage boy, he would do everything that pleases his white girlfriend and fight against what harms her because she knows he is in love with her emotionally and physically. Hence, Corey's race, gender, and sexuality intersect together.

Realizing the true intention of Baka from Marie's writings, he performs voodoo to neutralize the curse upon the Toussaint family whereas Baka uninterruptedly provokes him for intimacy as she says, "There's no reason you should die a virgin, Corey" (Due 609) but Corey refuses her invitation. This rejection infuriates Baka as the narrator states, "The Baka had been very unhappy with the way the boy circumvented its will in the wine cellar, firing



the gun to kill himself rather than doing as he had been told” (Due 625). The narrator refers to the demon as one who neither resembles a man nor a woman. It verifies that Baka has transformed itself into a woman figure to attract Corey sexually and emotionally. While fighting against Baka's possession, Corey shoots himself with his father's gun. Even after his suicide, the White police and sheriffs refused to run legal investigations and officially closed the case because he was insignificant in their eyes due to his juvenility, black skin, and African roots. If a wealthy powerful White man mysteriously died, the police would have given proper time and effort to investigate the cause, which unfortunately did not happen in Corey's case. Hence, his gender, race, cultural roots, and age intersect for which he has been unfairly treated after his death.

## **Chapter 7: Analysis of Riot Baby**

The scholars of intersectionality overlook Black men's issues of unfair treatment, violence, and trauma due to the intersection of their race, class, gender, age, ethnicity, nationality, and political ideology. This chapter extensively discusses the issues of intersectionality and intraracial microaggression of Kev to analyze how systematically and technically he has been controlled by the Whites which escalate the degree of his vulnerabilities compared to his sister, Ella.

### **7.1. Comparing intersecting issues between Ella and Kev**

Even though Ella and Kev are two young African American siblings who belong to the lower class with minimal social privilege, poverty, discrimination, and cruel treatment of Whites, they shape their experiences in a completely distinct manner which influences their ways of rational thinking. To elaborate, as an African American woman, Ella grows up witnessing financial crises and racial hatred in hospitals, and religious institutions due to her race, class, ethnicity, age, and gender. For instance, doctors in Centinela Hospital do not treat

her equally to the other patients because they know that her family is unable to pay the fees. Moreover, since she is a black African American, the White doctors become implicitly biased to provide medical treatment. Even if Centinela Hospital is used in *Riot Baby*, it has an actual dark history. As stated by Kwon (2023), a 31-year-old black woman died due to the lack of care and treatment from the doctors while in labor at Centinela Hospital. Such accidents repeatedly take place in the hospital whereas law enforcement fails to hold accountable the doctors and authorities for such cruel incidents. In the novel, Ella's race, gender, ethnicity, and nationality intersect forming an unpleasant experience for Ella to be unfairly treated by the doctors.

Furthermore, Ella has been mistreated by the pastor of the church because she is racially, ethnically, and financially substandard in comparison to White Americans. To illustrate, she is not allowed to pray with other worshippers but is forced to pray in the church basement whereas Whites are welcomed in the furnished prayer halls. Racial segregation fuels religious hatred between Blacks and Whites. Even if she questions the pastor about the political unrest perpetuated by the Whites against Blacks, the pastor refers to it as God's will which she should accept without hesitation. Such a separated congregation in the church and the unpleasant behavior of the pastor reflect social divisions based on ethnicity, nationality, race, and status within which Ella has become a victim of structural intersectionality.

Despite the setbacks, Ella does not lose her self-esteem and becomes determined to raise her voice against racial hatred to stop the violence and discrimination against Blacks by Whites. She has the power of premonition by which she can see what unpleasant things will take place in the future mostly concerning oppressed Blacks, and with the power of astral projection, she can travel across time. While witnessing the racial injustice and oppression against African American people, Ella compares herself to a Godlike persona who is vengeful against the White oppressors. She says —I am the locusts...I am the locusts and the frogs and

the rivers of blood. I'm here now" (Onyebuchi 91). Ella uses allusion to the biblical story that she is the locust, which is a projection of the wrath of God to punish humans. Hence, even though the white-dominated society tries to repress Ella, she never looks down upon herself, rather, she strengthens her beliefs to achieve a better position despite adverse consequences.

Unlike Ella, as a young African American man, Kev wants to pursue his dreams of earning a college degree and securing a job to provide financial assistance to his family, and desiring equal rights, dignity, and opportunity to elevate his position in society so that he could have enough significance in the White-dominated society, that is filled with love, acceptance, and respect despite his race, gender, ethnicity, and nationality. Kev states, "I get to college and get my degree. I want to tell Mama that we're healing, that we're fixing what we can fix" (Onyebuchi 26). Similar to Ella, Kev grows up experiencing poverty, however, unlike her, Kev initially thinks to spin his wheel of fortune to get over the hardship. Regrettably, his race, class, gender, age, religion, ethnicity, and nationality clash with White people's status, ideology, and power. As a consequence, his life becomes more difficult and reinforced by cruel circumstances such as racial insults, police brutality, incarceration, and injustice that limit his human rights to live with freedom and dignity.

## **7.2. Intra-racial Microaggression, Motivation, and Reaction of Kev**

Due to internalized racism through intentional and unintentional behavior and action, discriminatory attitudes are observed in black people against their own racial group of people which has been termed as intra-racial microaggression. In *Riot Baby*, as an impoverished African American teenager, Kev becomes the victim of intra-racial microaggression because his black fellow neighbor teenagers project biased attitudes against him to make fun of his race, ethnicity, culture, and nationality. To elaborate, the offenders time and again refer to Kev as the N-word, which is needless to say how offensive and vulgar the term is because

that has been used as a racial slur to insult mostly African American descent. Furthermore, Kev says that they often give him an “Ice grilling look” (Onyebuchi 22) which depicts intentional cold stares to strike fear and discomfort in him, which stimulate threat. One of the offenders indirectly threatens by stating, “We not vegetarians when it comes to the beef, bro.” (Onyebuchi 22). Even if it is not directly addressed to Kev, indirectly the beef is secretly associated with human flesh which eventually connotes physical harm or the death of Kev. Besides, since beef is often used to refer to the flesh of cattle, referring to Kev, the offender dismantles the human existence of Kev while comparing him to an animal. These incidents are categorized as microassaults and microinsults that include deliberate humiliation through name-calling and discriminatory behavior against the victim intentionally to defame him as oriental.

Furthermore, Kev has been a victim of another microinsult, as the offender further states, “Watchu learn about today?”...“See this kid? Smartest fuckin’ kid in the hood, yo. Could fix any computer on the block. I’m tellin’ you, this nigga goin’ to Harvard on some shit.” (Onyebuchi 18). The stereotypical thought has been injected into society by Whites that Black men are intellectually substandard in comparison to Whites, which has been internalized by the black offenders. As a result, they mock Kev that he would study at Harvard whereas they mean his effort in schooling is going to be a loss because he is going to end up like one of them, who roams around the community purposelessly. Moreover, referring to Kev while laughing, one of the offenders states, “George Washington Carver woulda been that nigga in jail”...“Nigga would throw down a peanut, it turns into a ladder-like fuckin’ Inspector Gadget!” (Onyebuchi 18). Associating Kev with George Washington Carver, who was an American agricultural scientist and inventor, the gang mocks the potential intellectual capabilities of Kev that despite having profound knowledge, Kev would end up in prison.

Since the offenders belong to the same black community as Kev, it is significant to question their source of motivation for which they portray intraracial microaggression, despite having no personal issues with him. One reason behind this intraracial microaggression is the destructive influence of White behavior. In detail, to look down upon Black people as inferior, the Whites often use dehumanizing terms such as savage, barbaric, and the N-word to refer to the Blacks. The offenders are inspired by the White evil behavior and they try to create a false impression similar to Whites to amplify the white image over black skin. The second possible source of motivation is creating an intraracial social division within the black community that the offenders wanted to have a separate category of them which is much feared, elevated, and respected in comparison to the rest of the Blacks. Another way of being motivated to demonstrate racial prejudice is that in every aspect of life, the offenders believe that there is no way to defeat the discrimination and violence against Blacks by the powerful Whites, which evokes anger in the offenders. Consequently, such intraracial microaggressive attitudes are the outcome of their frustration because they find no other way to release it.

In terms of reacting to microaggression, Kev neither portrays any sign of dislike nor confronts them verbally or physically. Rather Kev fears their presence as he states “I walk like I don’t even hear them”...“His voice paralyzes me. I don’t know why I’m so scared of him, but everything just feels ominous. Like the feeling you get when you’re about to get into a fight when all the blood rushes to your face and time runs and crawls at the same time” (Onyebuchi 22-23). The quote signifies that even though Kev feels anger against the offenders for making fun of him, he is scared of them and tries to ignore them as much as he can. However, to release his repressed anger, he often slaps glass which reinforces his inability as an African American teenage boy who lacks self-esteem to resist the offenders,

unlike Ella. This is how Kev's intersection of race, class, ethnicity, and nationality entraps him from experiencing hostility.

### **7.3. Biased Criminal Justice System against Kev**

The scholars of intersectionality including Crenshaw claim that the wrongfully convicted Black women experience injustice as their cases are neglected and presented to the court in a fabricated manner, however, she overlooks how Black men are also helpless regarding the criminal justice system. Due to the intersecting identity which includes race, class, gender, age, ethnicity, and nationality, Kev explicitly experiences police brutality, wrongful incarceration, and unfair justice in a White-dominated state. In detail, only based on intuition, he has been stopped and frisked by the U.S. police several times while he has been threatened and beaten for no specific offense. As described by Kev, “I’m on the ground with a police boot on my cheek... The cop cracks me across the face, right on the cheekbone, and I spend a stunned second on the ground before sitting upright and spitting blood into the snow, then grinning through my red teeth” (Onyebuchi, 27-28). Since he is a young black African American man, the intuition of the police against him is very firm. It is their preconceived ideology that an African American man, mostly those who are young, are bound to be criminals or related to any illegal practice for which they randomly interrogate Black men anywhere anytime. This is how Kev becomes a victim of representational intersectionality. Alexander (2010) states, “Mass stops of young African American men and boys resulted in the creation of a database containing the names, addresses, and other biographical information of the overwhelming majority of young black men in the entire city. The LAPD justified its database as a tool for tracking gang or “gang-related” activity” (Alexander 148). Additionally, the author, Onyebuchi refers to other Black men who have been victims of police brutality in the real world which also resemble Kev. For example, Onyebuchi mentions Rodney King who was accused of driving over speed in 1991 and severely beaten by Police

officers, Sean Bell who died in 2006 due to 50 rounds of bullets based on the accusation of leading prostitution and carrying weapons, and Oscar Grant who died in 2009 while being a victim of police brutality in public (Wikipedia).

The U.S. police stop Kev while noticing him with a blood spot on his jacket which strikes the misrepresentation among the police about him as a murderer. However, the blood strain contains Kev's blood from when he was beaten by police officers a few hours back based on intuition. Like previously, the police officer smashed his face into the glass and hit his ribs while twisting his arms. Without proper inquiry and giving a chance of explanation, police arrested him for the act of violence and imprisoned him for 8 years. Being wrongfully incarcerated, the physical and mental torture on Kev does not lessen for an inch. His identity has been reduced to New York State Identification Number, 25768192Y. This number is assigned to the convict by the state Division of Criminal Justice Services to locate his identity and criminal records.

As an under aged suspected criminal, after two months of imprisonment, Kev encountered a judge and after six months, he was on trial where no conclusion had been made by the prosecution and the Jury. Regrettably, this practice of delayed criminal justice led by the White administration against Kev is highly calculated. As stated by the narrator, the schedules of court dates have been arranged in a particular manner so that either the accused black or his lawyer fails to appear on time for which the justice system fines the accused offering installments despite knowing the accused could not pay the interest. Since the suspected criminal fails to pay on time, the justice system declares lifetime imprisonment. Consequently, a young black African American man, Kev is unable to pursue his dream of earning his desired degree and fails to appear in job interviews that he has been planning for his social mobility. Without committing any crime, Kev has been identified as a criminal which foretells his miserable future. In terms of physical torture, Kev goes through police

surveillance and excessive routinized violence for which ~~his~~ brain becomes like capsules, pills. Seroquel. Benadryl, drugs the medical staff give him” (Onyebuchi 35). Sometimes, he has been forced by the prison warden to take part in Rodeo which is another way to punish prisoners as it is very risky to complete.

Other than physical torture, Kev has to endure physical hard work. For instance, he is bound to do assigned jobs such as fixing computers in jails for which he has been allowed to use a tablet PC in which he can read particular news regarding incarceration, police brutality, and prison violence. It is the power/knowledge strategy of prison authorities to control the prisoners in the name of providing facilities while injecting fear (shows power) through the news (indicates knowledge). Additionally, he has been selected to share the rules, regulations, and experience of brutality with new inmates which is a cold strategy of the prison that keeps alive the pain and fear of punishment through recalling memories. Retelling the experience of rusty metal breaking jawline, fists smashing cheekbones and cracking ribs, and getting a boot print into the chest increases mental torture for Kev. At the same time, the storytelling originates potential fear in new inmates which prepares them to be a harmless prisoner by breaking their inner strength and letting them know that there is no way of resistance. This is how the legal system run by the White administration entraps Kev in such ways that his life becomes devastated behind bars.

#### **7.4. Life in Parole: Manipulation and Trauma via Biopower, Biopolitics, and Governmentality**

Kev becomes the victim of the prison industrial complex<sup>9</sup> which includes manipulation and trauma. To elaborate, in the parole community, Kev has been taken under technological surveillance in which he has been monitored through algorithms instead of

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<sup>9</sup> Prison industrial complex describes multiple interests of government and industry which becomes a way of exploitation of prison labor by linking private corporations to government, media, and the correctional community.



human surveillance. A microchip has been implanted inside his thumb to monitor his emotions, thoughts, heart rate, blood pressure, and access. Furthermore, in the name of treating previous trauma, the Parole authority injects drugs through the chip that prevents Kev from confronting the bitter realities and manipulation of the White administration and makes him an obedient convict who has lost his power of resistance against violence. The chip balances the agitation of Kev through secret medication about which he is unaware. This strategy of the parole authority reinforces Michel Foucault's concept of biopower which is a systematic approach towards technology to control, regulate, and subjugate the body, behavior, and life of Kev to fulfill the expectations of the Parole community without any confrontation. The practice of biopower causes him catatonia which refers to a disorder that disrupts the function of the brain and affects how a person responds to the world around him.

Furthermore, with media assistance, the authority injects its hidden propaganda to make the parolees familiar with the process of subjugation. To explain, there are logos and billboards with the same three-bar logo of the chip that has been implanted inside Kev to bring him under surveillance. It reinforces the idea of Power/knowledge by Michel Foucault because the billboards and logos are works of media that become a discourse that is neither a neutral nor a simple trajectory to convey information rather, it becomes a power-embedded instrument to control the truths. Through the advertisement of the microchip, power is omnipresent and circulates in all strata of the parole community influencing the convicts and normalizing its use.

Through the art of governmentality, the parole authority forms institutions, protocols, and procedures with calculations and tactics that perpetuate complex exercises of power to conduct the population as its target which reinforces the idea of biopolitics. To elaborate, the authorities consider Kev's desires, meanwhile, all of his relationships have been disconnected from the real world. This procedure reinforces biopolitical power in which the administration

tries to optimize the life of the subject through propagation concerning political power to control and regulate him. In Parole community, Kev's life is free from police brutality. Moreover, he gets his dream home and a job as an apprentice without dealing with the issues of job applications and financial investment which makes Kev content and satisfied. Since Kev's desires have been unexpectedly fulfilled, his attitude towards Parole starts to transform positively, and yet being in confinement, he remains content. Thus, the authority creates a strategic society where like other parolees, Kev subscribes to facilities that shape him according to the desire of the power holder. This is how he has been systematically controlled by the authority. Gradually Kev loses control over his body and mind while sensing an invisible psychological torture that has no remedy. Besides, he suffers from hypomania which refers to a bipolar disorder in which the behavior of the victim unexpectedly changes for some time. Kev's behavior, emotion, and perception change into positivity towards the parole regulation when the system facilitates him with his desired essentials, whereas his perception and emotion change into negativity towards the system when his rights and dignity are violated, which shows that he is suffering from hypomania.

Even if superficially Kev thinks the Parole life is free from unwanted interventions by White because he does not need to endure physical violence, discrimination, racial hatred, and microaggressive attitude, he has been trapped with no control over his free will. He is not allowed to ask for anything, which is not sponsored by the community such as he is not allowed to visit his family any longer which forever isolates him from the real world. Thus his comfort zone becomes another prison in which he remains confined. Alexander states, "One in three young African American men is currently under the control of the criminal justice system—in prison, in jail, on probation, or on parole" (Alexander, 24) reinforces an image of Kev. Even though both of the siblings, Ella and Kev deal with issues of intersecting identities, as a black African American man from the lower class, Kev endures intraracial

violence, police brutality, the injustice of law and order, and lifetime restrictions in Parole that take his physical and psychological toll.

## **Chapter 8: Discussion**

Being African American men, Mr. Pi, Corey, and Kev from *The Son of Mr. Suleman*, *The Good House*, and *Riot Baby* become the victim of structural, political, and representational intersectionality due to the intersection of their race, class, gender, sexuality, age, ethnicity, nationality, profession, language, and political standpoint that intensify their experience of manipulation, discrimination, biased criminal justice system, reverse sexism, and humiliation. It is undeniable that Ms. Buckingham, Marie, and Ella endure unfair treatment and violence, however, they all fight against intersectional issues of identity through different ways that allow them to lead better lives in comparison to Mr. Pi, Corey, and Kev. For instance, Ms. Buckingham leads a lavish lifestyle that keeps her safe from the unwanted situation resulting from her intersecting identities of race, gender, sexuality, class, and cultural roots. Marie knows voodoo magic that privileges her to fight against the adverse situation created by her White neighbors due to her overlapping identities. Besides, Ella achieves the power of premonition that allows her to see the future that allows her to take action according to her necessity to avoid or fight against issues.

Regrettably, the colored men, Mr. Pi, Corey, and Kev do not have access to such privilege and power as the colored women in the texts. Their intersectional identities accelerate unequal treatment compared to Gemma Buckingham, Marie Toussaint, and Ella. Based on the scale of Oppression Olympic, the black male characters are the worst sufferers than the black female characters. These men become the victims of a biased justice system. In terms of law and order, Crenshaw (1989) overlooks how Black males are also discriminated against by White society where the courts do not bring justice to Black males. They have

been convicted wrongfully by the U.S. criminal justice system for years because they are black, men and African, which allows the criminal justice system to preconceived the idea that black men are bound to be criminalistics and should be incarcerated and strictly punished. As stated by Alexander in *The New Jim Crow*, “The fact that more than half of the young black men in any large American city are currently under the control of the criminal justice system” (Alexander 31). Additionally, Sacks (2004) states, that the white Jury needs a little proof against the convicted black men as they are naturally convicted as criminals” (Sacks 19). Mr. Pi has been systematically subjugated and excluded by his white colleagues at the university and social events and the police which has made him a victim of structural intersectionality. He has been stopped and frisked by police, threatened by police, falsely alleged, and the Judge even if Dr. Calhoun made the story of sodomy. On the other hand, no action has been taken against Dr. Calhoun after proving she is guilty. Also, the white colleagues who humiliate him time and again remain in the dark without facing any adverse consequences. It is because of their financial, political, and racial power and influence over the social setting and a black African American man, Mr. Pi. In the case of Kev, he has been incarcerated based on intuition for over 8 years without having any legal help or proper trial. Additionally, he has been through physical and systematic mental torture in prison. For his lifetime, he has been shifted to a parole community where through the art of governmentality, the parole authorities have destroyed his power of thinking and resistance while taking him under intense surveillance without any physical intervention. Furthermore, Corey’s suicide remains uninvestigated and the case has been closed by the local sheriffs and police because according to the biased and racist setting, the suicide of a black teenage boy does not require much attention. Even though Mr. Pi, Corey, and Kev are fictional characters, real-life African American men such as Thomas Raynard James and Leonard Mack were exonerated recently after being incarcerated for 32 to 47 years due to murder charges and rape (Bun, 2022 &

Muzaffar, 2024). The wrongful convicts are black, men, and financially challenged, hence, the intersection of their race, sex, and class intensifies their miseries. This shows how law and order in the United States of America remain cruel and harsh against Black African men as often they are not blessed with legal support and justice.

Furthermore, patriarchy is a governmental or societal system in which male figures hold the authoritative power whereas women are excluded. Regarding the patriarchal nature, Crenshaw, Collins, Hook, and McCall claim that black men imitate white men to exercise patriarchal power to subjugate black women, which does not align with the exploitation of black men's intersectionality concerning the selected texts. Curry (2022) states —“The assertion of patriarchy by all men over women is vastly inaccurate because the feminist understanding of patriarchy emphasizes an ahistorical claim about patriarchy that is not being foundationally rooted in various differentiation between kinds of men” (Curry 530). The scholars of Intersectionality also ignore that African American men can be exoticized, insulted, manipulated, and oppressed due to their intersecting identities with white women because the women have race and gender privilege that is strengthened by the white patriarchy in comparison to African American men. Since he belongs to the lower class, he has been manipulated and used by the white woman, Dr. Calhoun. She reveals her sinful sexual desire assuming that as a black African American underprivileged man, he would agree to have sex with her and stigmatizes him to be a sexual freak who can satisfy her physically. Besides, Dr. Calhoun has racial and gender privilege along with political influence over Mr. Pi which turns into a severe disadvantage for him because back then the governmental regulatory institutions were led by Donald Trump who has been often tagged as being a racist. Mr. Pi states, —“They love the Black vote and hate Black folks” (Dickey 44). Additionally, Alexander (2010) states that colored men who were born in the United States are mostly denied basic freedom from democracy (Alexander 16). Mr. Pi's political ideology supports Malcolm X,

Barack Obama, and Nelson Mandela and collides with the law and order of Trump's era which makes him a victim of political intersectionality. Even though the law and the social system are run by the hand of white patriarchy, Mr. Pi has been a victim of his intersectional identities. Corey has been excluded from the investigation after his death by police and town sheriffs. The judge's verdict in Kev's case is biased. The judges, white colleagues, police, neighbors, and sheriffs occupy the authoritative positions and are the practitioners of White patriarchy. In terms of setting the law, rules, and regulations, the white men determine the boundaries, and the Black men have been mistreated, discriminated, and wrongfully punished. Hence, the ideology that black men cannot be discriminated against based on their gender in a patriarchal society is not entirely appropriate.

Regarding Black men's sexual domination, Hooks's states that sex is the only medium for the assertion of manhood and a way of reconceptualizing maleness which they do not have access to in a society that is controlled by whites. Black males from all walks of life find affirmation of their power through sexual conquests in Hook's view (Hooks 83). She identified that through sexual violence against women, black men try to hide their psychological sexual impotence and powerlessness (Hooks 86). She categorizes black men who want to compete their black masculinity with white masculinity but white men are controlling society leaving no scope of taking control of black men, therefore, frustrated black men are becoming sexual beasts to portray their patriarchal charge and control on women. However, Curry (2017) also states, Black men are thought to be latent rapists, violent patriarchs, and a privileged Black male" (Curry 1). Curry cites the words of William and Holmes that White men strive for patriarchal domination of women but black men are less powerful than white men for which they do not fit into the same patriarchal parameters as white men. Mr. Pi becomes the victim of reverse sexism and racism that clashes with what Hook claims. Besides, on trial, Dr. Calhoun does not face any legal consequences despite

proving that she has manipulated, sexually assaulted, and mentally pressured Mr. Pi to have sex with her. Hence, Dr. Calhoun's identities of race, gender, class, nationality, and political standpoint together favored her and allowed her to oppress Mr. Pi. Additionally, Mr. Pi's race, gender, sexuality, and ethnicity intersect which has made him hypersexual for Ms. Buckingham and Komorebi. Besides, in *The Good House*, Corey has been exoticized by White girls and manipulated by Baka who, being a white womanly creature seduces him so that she can take revenge on the Toussaint family. If Corey were not a heterosexual black African American young man, he would neither be exoticized and stigmatized for his African masculinity by girls nor sexually attracted by Baka. Hence, Corey's race, age, gender, and sexuality, cultural roots intersect together which leads him to taste such bitter experiences. Even if intersectional scholars such as Crenshaw (1989, 2010, 2017), Collins (2015), and Hooks (2004) accuse Black men in general of sexual predators, in the case of Mr. Pi and Corey, they have endured sexual misconduct by White women.

Even if MacKinnon and Hooks have referred to Black patriarchy or Black masculinity as the mirror or replica of White patriarchy which is extremely oppressive and subjugates Black women, African American men from the primary texts have completely different approaches to Black masculinity which is supportive towards black women and family. To illustrate, Mr. Pi helped his mother and sisters by doing odd jobs in multiple shifts at a young age to give them financial support. He always prioritizes his family over everything and he never misbehaves or does physical harm to his female family members. Additionally, Corey often says to his mother “I’m gonna take care of you good, Mom” (Due 607) and he commits suicide to save his mother from Baka. Furthermore, Kev desires to finish his degree and find a job so that his mother does not need to work overshifts and he can take care of his family. Hence, these African American men are caring and supportive towards their female family members, instead of imitating White patriarchy to subjugate black women.

However, constant microaggressive attitudes push Mr. Pi, Corey, and Kev beyond their boundaries even if they try to control their reaction at the initial stage. In the beginning, they try to ignore the mean comments and avoid offenders. In particular, Mr. Pi tries a self-calming strategy by saying the offenders are incapable of understanding his hardship. Corey sings his rap song of protest all alone to protect his self-esteem. The constant prejudice forces them to be verbally aggressive and lose their self-control. The offenders are mostly Whites and they intend to upscale their status and glorify their nation that belongs to Whites while making these black men feel ashamed of their race, class, and status and eventually ashamed of their African culture which has been referred to as the culture of inferiors. The uninterrupted intersectional microaggression creates psychological dilemmas for Mr. Pi, Corey, and Kev. Mr. Pi suffers from the fear of brutal death anytime by intruders for which he lives in anxiety and stress that eventually leads him to post-traumatic stress disorder. Corey becomes paranoid about the presence of the offenders. Kev becomes catatonic and hypomanic disrupting the functionality of his brain and emotion.

## **Chapter 9: Conclusion**

The thesis fundamentally aims to investigate how the intersection of race, class, gender, sexuality, age, ethnicity, nationality, professional designation, and political standpoint intensify the miseries of African American men compared to African American women from the three contemporary texts, *The Son of Mr. Suleman* by Eric Jerome Dickey, *The Good House* by Tananarive Due, and *Riot Baby* by Tochi Onyebuchi.

Scholars of intersectionality including Crenshaw, Collins, Hooks, and McCall profoundly focused on the issues of the intersections relating to black women. The traditional theorization of intersectionality is mostly occupied with unique experiences of oppression concerning Black women, whereas, black men have been portrayed as the



practitioners of white patriarchy who are most abusive toward women to subjugate them.

Even if some scholars and critics such as Jennifer C. Nash emphasize the rethinking of intersectionality in which the central argument can go beyond Black women, unfortunately, notable differences have been less observed in terms of theoretical interpretation.

Black men's issues of intersectionality have been either neglected or deliberately bypassed by scholars. Besides, microaggression has started to take place in the racist societal system as a subtle expression through which black people are humiliated and indirectly criticized in the era of post-racism. The scholars of microaggression solely focus on issues of black women and men who have different sexual orientations mostly in educational settings while overlooking that heterosexual African American black men can be victims of microaggression. Hence, the research has discussed how Mr. Pi, Corey, and Kev became the targets of intersectional microaggression and how they responded to cope with or confront the situation.

To accomplish the research, the intersection of race, class, gender, age, sexuality, political standpoint, professional designation, ethnicity, and nationality of Mr. Pi, Corey, and Kev has been extensively analyzed for which they have endured humiliation, unfair treatment, and violence by the White privileged group of people regardless of their gender and sometimes by Black women and men. These men become the sufferers of structural, political, and representational intersectionality.

In *The Son of Mr. Suleman*, Mr. Pi's intersection of race, gender, sexuality, and ethnicity forces him to be the victim of sexual misconduct by the colored women, Ms. Buckingham and Komorebi, and the white woman, Dr. Calhoun. Even though Mr. Pi stays strong on his morals, the manipulation, humiliation, and mental abuse destroy him emotionally. Also, the intersection of race, gender, class, sexuality, political ideology,

professional designation, and ethnicity remains at the core which labeled him as savage, unsocial, hypersexual, and rapist by The judge, white colleagues, and Dr. Calhoun.

Mr. Pi's experience of explicit and inexplicit violence, unjust legal treatment, and life threats which have been accelerated due to the intersections of his overlapping identities and clash with white despotism, eventually drives him to severe trauma. However, according to the oppression olympic method, Ms. Buckingham as a colored woman endured less violence and discrimination due to her intersection of identities compared to Mr. Pi, and eventually she gets over all of her hardships.

Furthermore, in *The Good House*, Corey's intersection of race, gender, and age makes him the target of White fellow neighbors who always inject racial resentment against him because he is black and a man of their age, hence, in the eyes of a racist society, the offenders are permitted to bully Corey because he is racially inferior to the offenders, shares same gender and age with the offenders. He has been sexually exorcized by White girls and tricked by Baka to complete its revenge. They internalize the idea that as white women, they can easily exploit an African American teenage boy who is supposed to be sexually weak in front of their sexual provocations. Hence, his sexuality, gender, age, and ethnicity intersect for which Corey has been a victim of social stereotypes, and structural and representational intersectionality, whereas, Marie's issues of intersectionality and microaggression are relatively less affect her in the scale of oppression olympic compared to Corey.

Even if in *Riot Baby*, Kev and Ella have a similar desire to live life with equal rights and dignity, she has endured racial and religious hatred. Fortunately, racial resentment does not harm Ella's self-determination. On the contrary, although Kev desires to earn his educational degree to have a job and own a home where he can live happily with his family,

he becomes the victim of intraracial microaggression by Black men. It has been intensified by the unfair criminal justice system that caused him physical and psychological torture. As discussed, the tendency of being incarcerated of African American young men is high. Consequently, Kev has been incarcerated and shifted to Parole despite being not guilty. Nevertheless, his crime is that he is an African American man of a young age who must be convicted as a criminal in the eyes of the U.S. police. Thus, the intersection of his race, gender, age, and ethnicity forced him to spend the rest of his life behind bars and in the parole community without having any legal support. This is how the research examines how the intersection and microaggression of these African American male characters intensify their experience of oppression in different spheres of life.

As per the limitation, this thesis profoundly emphasizes the vulnerabilities and hardship of African American men through the lens of intersectionality and microaggression which is related to the primary texts *The Son of Mr. Suleman*, *The Good House*, and *Riot Baby* while focusing on the three main male characters Mr. Pi, Corey, and Kev. However, all the mentioned parameters of intersecting identity are not equally relevant to Mr. Pi, Corey, and Kev. Also, these three male characters from the text do not entirely represent the struggling African American men in the U.S. because not all Black men experience oppression, violence, humiliation, and injustice in the same way. There can be alternative interpretations based on different circumstances. Further research on intersectionality and microaggression may strive to understand issues of black men beyond African Americans as well as black women who are immigrants, Hispanics, and mixed race based on the intersection of ethnicity, nationality, gender, sexuality, and class and how it affects their physical and psychological well-being. This will help to expand the literary interpretation of the study of intersectionality and microaggression more intricately.



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